A WINTER IN RETIREMENT

HANNAH BLANEY WASHBURN

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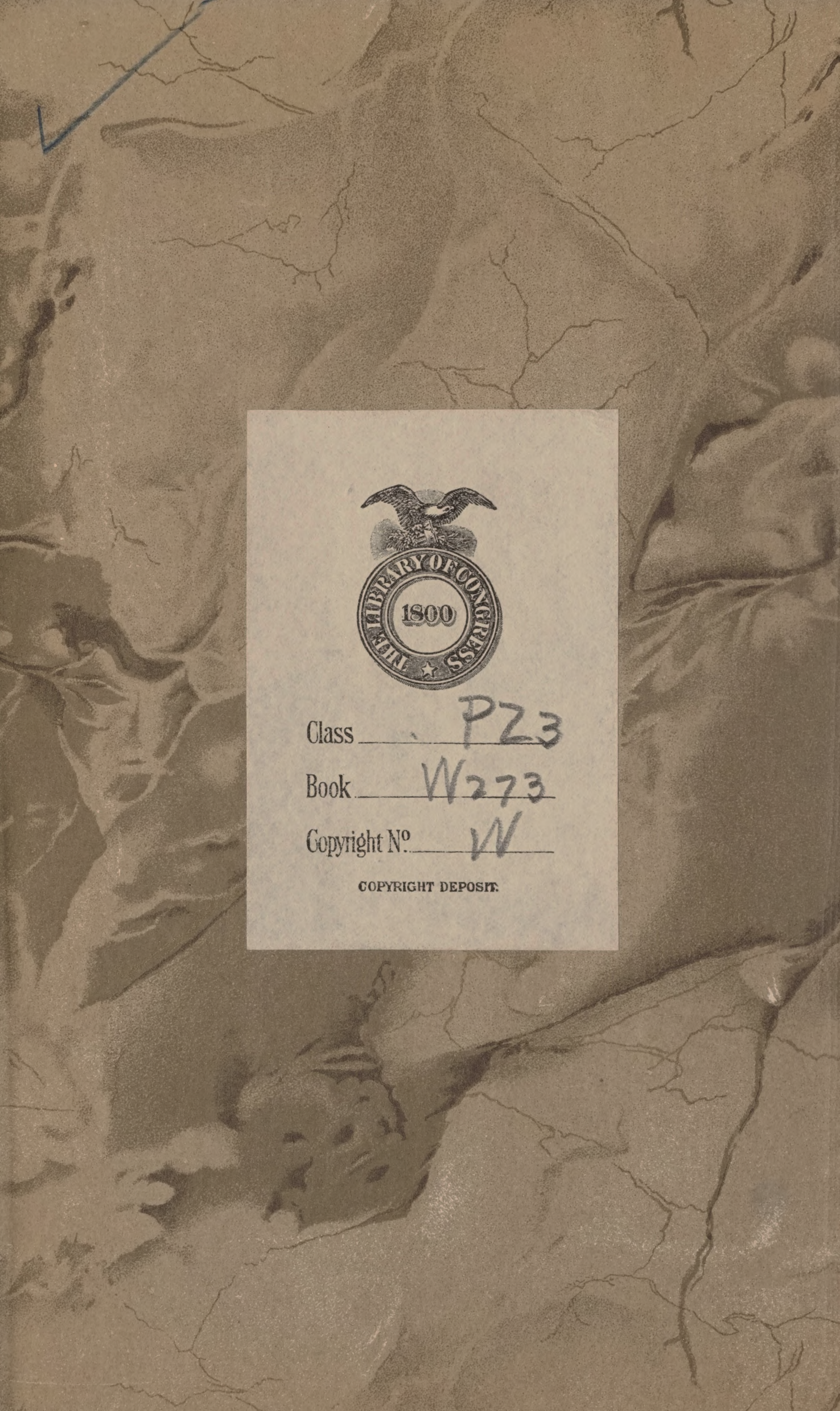

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A Winter in Retirement

Or

Scattered Leaves

By

Hannah Blaney Washburn

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Forty-Second Street Building, New York

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PREFACE

The scene of this little sketch is laid in one of the most delightful of our sea-coast residences, as it respects local situation; one of the earliest settlements of New England, and the birthplace of many individuals, whose memory, though perhaps unknown to fame, is cherished by their descendants to the third and fourth generation. With the hope that it may be received with favor, and do good, the writer, who is herself a native of Lynn, offers it to the public.

H. B. W.

A WINTER IN RETIREMENT

OR

SCATTERED LEAVES

Chapter I

A home on Ocean's sounding shore
  Would be the home for me,
Though loudly hoarse the wild waves roar,
  'Tis the music of the Sea.

There is no prospect more lovely and attractive to those who were born upon its shores, than that of the Ocean. In the heat and sunshine of a bright summer day, there is a delicious coolness and refreshment in the breezes which float over its waters never to be forgotten by the wanderer from his native home, and even the hollow murmuring of its waves, when presaging an approaching storm, and their wild roar when the tempest is abroad in its fury, is remembered with a sort of pleasure as being the lullaby for many a calm and sound night's sleep. In sickness, when far away from the land of his birth, the exile will remember its pure and healthful atmosphere, and in his dreams, perhaps, fancy himself treading the pebbly shore, and feeling the pleasant air upon his fevered brow. Such a fond remembrance has led to the location of the scene of this tale, a remembrance which will exist as long as memory remains.

"And this is the end of all our plans and anticipations for the winter? Oh, Mary, what shall we do through this long dreary season of nearly six months? No balls, no parties, indeed, no society, shut up in my aunt's lonely house, with nothing to amuse us but the sound of the dismal waves, dashing against the rocks, the mournful wind, whistling through that forest of apple trees, and not a man to be seen but old Philip"—and here the voice of the speaker was stopped by her tears which were, however, soon soothed by the mild and gentle voice of her sister.

"Do look on the bright side of things, dear Susan," said she, "you forget, how, when we were little girls, we used to love that

orchard, how many merry plays we have had among those trees, and how many stories old Phillip would tell us; then, the beautiful shells we picked up upon the little beach, at the foot of the rocks,"—"But that was in the summer, Mary, when you know it is pleasant out doors, and that was when we were so young, and so easily amused, but now it is so very different, and then Aunt Wilson is so very, very pious—Oh; she will not let us read anything but sermons, or sing anything but psalm tunes."

This was, indeed, but a gloomy prospect for a gay young girl of seventeen, and it required more stoicism than Susan Morton possessed to view it with indifference. The illness of their father, the necessity of his seeking a warmer climate through the winter, and his wish that his wife should accompany him, were the reasons which had induced him to trust his daughters, during his absence, to the care of his sister, a widow lady of much respectability, who resided near the sea-coast, and, who, since the death of her husband, had devoted her time and talents to the education of her children, two sons and a daughter; and, it was after bidding a sorrowful adieu to their parents, and finding themselves shut up in the carriage, which was to convey them to their winter home, that this conversation commenced. Susan was the youngest of the two sisters, a lively beautiful girl, very fond of society, and always the life and animation of every circle. She had formed many gay schemes of pleasure for the coming winter, the winter after she entered her seventeenth year, which had been all dispersed by the gradual but increasing illness of her father, and she had listened to the arrangement which had consigned her to the care of her aunt through that season which she had anticipated with so much delight with a dissatisfaction and gloom, which prevented her from seeing anything pleasant in their winter abode, or seizing upon any circumstances to soften her disappointment. Not so with Mary; with as lively a disposition as her sister, she still possessed the happy talent of extracting pleasure from any situation, and enjoying herself under almost any circumstances, and now endeavored, with earnest kindness, to bring to her remembrance many little events of their early youth, connected with their aunt and her family, which would aid in restoring her tranquility, and she succeeded, for before their arrival at their destined home, Susan had joined in many a merry laugh at some pleasant recollection. The evening of a dull November day closed in before they arrived at the end of their journey, the monotonous dashing of the waves against the beach sounded drearily, and the chilly air, and the gloomy appearance of the sky made them welcome the bright light, which they knew, streamed from the retired dwelling of their aunt. The carriage now turned into the lane which led

to the house, and they were greeted at the porch by the kind old Philip, whose hair seemed not a shade whiter, nor his face a whit more wrinkled than when, five years before, two lively little girls, they bade him "good-bye," at that very door. They had hardly time to return his good humored smile, when they were surrounded by the rest of the family, and the affectionate caresses of their aunt, the joyous welcome of their cousins, and even the broad smile which displayed the white teeth of black Phoebe, made them feel that they had, indeed, as Philip said, "Got home again," and caused Susan to forget her sad forebodings. The transition from the cold darkness of the evening without to the pleasant warmth and cheerful light of the sitting room was delightful, and, in a short time Susan found herself seated among a circle of lovely and beloved friends, all striving to make her happy, and all happy together, and, when, after an evening of the most charming sociability, she found herself alone with her sister, she acknowledged that she was never more entertained than she was this evening.

A bright and pleasant morning sun after a night of uninterrupted and tranquil repose, rendered sweet by the fatigue of the preceding day, restored all the gay cheerfulness of Susan, and she received the kind greetings of her friends, and their affectionate inquiries, with all her wonted good humor. A livelier party never surrounded a breakfast table, from the mother to the youngest of Mrs. Wilson's children, the light-hearted Charles, a sprightly, intelligent boy of thirteen. Her eldest, a son, a member of the University, had returned to his home to spend the winter vacation. Herbert Wilson was a noble specimen of the youth of New England, active and enterprising, uniting to a fine constitution, habits of industry and order, and already ranking high among the talented sons of his native State. Elizabeth, the daughter, was the counterpart, in disposition, of her cousin Mary; she was the friend and companion of her mother, and the loving counsellor of her brothers. The clouds of the preceding evening had dispersed; it was one of those delightful days which sometimes occur in November; a walk was proposed to the sea-shore, and with light and happy hearts, the young party, after crossing the brow of the hill, which separated them from the ocean, beheld its vast expanse stretched before them in boundless majesty. The sands, covered with shells, sparkled in the sunbeams; far off, in the distance, were seen the white sails of ships, some leaving their native shores, and some returning to them, and, in the southwest, rose the dome of the State House and many spires of Boston, from whence, on a clear morning, might be heard the cheerful sound of bells. On the smooth beach that united the shore with the

beautiful peninsula of Nahant, were seen sportsmen with their guns, in pursuit of the wild fowl, which were wheeling in hurried circles above their heads, and, here and there, a fishing boat, lying upon the surface of the water, while its owner was engaged in his customary employment of fishing. "How delightful," said Susan, "I could not have believed it would have been so pleasant here in November. I think I shall be quite contented here, after all." "But reflect, my cousin," said Herbert, "this is one of our days of sunshine, what will you say in the days of storm and tempest, when the waves dash against these rugged rocks, and the rain pours in torrents or snow darkens the atmosphere?" "Oh," said the listening Charles, "you would not be discontented then, for, you know, the days are short, and soon pass away, and the evenings are so pleasant. Oh, cousin Susan! you don't know anything about those winter evenings." "Do tell me about them, Charlie, do tell me," said the lively Susan. "Well, then, Herbert reads"— "Stop, stop, my little man," said Herbert, "do not let Susan waste all her pleasure in anticipation, but, I hope, dear cousin of mine, to convince you that our happiness is not dependent upon the weather, or upon local situation, and, that, years hence, perhaps, on some bright day, in the most delightful season of the year, or, when surrounded, it may be with everything to make your life happy, you will look back to this winter in retirement as one of the bright spots in your existence." "I am half inclined to believe you, dear Herbert, but we will walk faster, for I think Mary and Elizabeth have found a prize." Charles now bounded over the sands, and, upon joining his sister and cousin, found them engaged in examining a shell fish of singular construction. "Why, it is nothing but a horseshoe," said he. "Uncle Bill says they call them so because they look like one, and, look, Herbert, there is Uncle Bill himself, with a basket of clams. Hurrah! Uncle Bill, what will you do with your clams?" He then ran to join a man who was coming from the edge of the water, where he had been employed in procurring the contents of his basket. He was slightly built, of a florid complexion, and a mild sensible countenance, but a certain wandering and restless expression indicated an unsettled mind. As Herbert greeted him kindly his eyes lighted with animation, and his respectful salute to the young ladies had an air of good breeding, unusual in a person in his apparent condition of life. To the repeated question of Charles as to what he would do with his clams, he said he would carry some to Phoebe, that she might make him a chowder. "That is the very thing, Uncle Bill; hurrah for clam chowder, and I'll go forward and tell her," said Charles, and he ran on, followed more slowly by Uncle Bill. "There is something singular in the appearance of

that man," said Mary. "There is something singular in his history," said Herbert. "Sometime, on one of those stormy days of which I have forewarned Susan, I will tell you the outlines of it." "Oh, no outlines," said Susan, "tell me all the particulars, all the little shades of the story. I do not like rough sketches, I have not imagination enough to fill them up." "I will tell you all I myself know of his life," said Herbert, "and it is an illustration of the caprice and coquetry of which some of your sex are accused." "A love story; that will be grand," said Susan, "only it is a pity that the hero is an old clam merchant."

A cheerful walk returned them to their home, where each resorted to their usual avocations, Herbert to pursue his studies and instruct Charles, Elizabeth to attend to and learn the necessary duties of a housewife, and during their morning walk she had contrived to inspire Mary with a desire to emulate her in becoming a complete cook and housekeeper, and thus give her kind mother an agreeable surprise on her return. Susan, also, was forming many plans for her winter pursuits, among which, one was commencing the study of Latin, under the instruction of Herbert, and another of working, in worsted, a cover for a family Bible, with the names of her parents wrought upon it, in imitation of the one which laid upon her aunt's table, and which she thought would please her father and mother. Thus the day passed, and when the family surrounded the tea table, health and cheerfulness glowed in every countenance, and Susan forgot every cause of discontent. After the tea things were removed. "Now," said Charles, "now for the story, Herbert." "What," said Susan, "about Uncle Bill?" "No, no, not now," said Charles, a story about Rome, in the time of the early Christians. I am studying the history of Rome in Latin, and Herbert promised he would read a story about it." "In that case, Charles," said Mrs. Wilson, "you will be able to detect any deviations from the truth of history." "But, may I speak, mother, when I think I find anything that is not true?" "There will be times, my dear, when Herbert will pause awhile, and then you can make your remarks." "There is a peculiar charm," said Herbert, "in retracing the records of antiquity, for we lose sight, in the distance, of all roughness and inequalities, and our imagination only rests upon the smooth and distant perspective. I remember journeying with my father, many years ago, through the northern part of this State, and when I remarked to him that the hills which we saw around us looked as if they were highly cultivated, their surface appearing so even and delightful, here and there dotted with clumps of trees, he repeated the words of the poet, ' 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.' 'If, my son, you were there, upon those

very spots that appear so pleasant, you would be disappointed by their rugged and uneven appearance, perhaps deformed with unsightly stumps, or with patches of rock.' " "So it is with the romance of history," said Elizabeth, "but, if we are too critical in our remarks, we should lose much pleasure." "True," said Herbert, "and therefore, not to spoil the appetite of Charles for our little tale, we will not proceed with our illustrations." Herbert produced his manuscript, the little circle arranged themselves at their different employments, and silence ensued, while in a clear voice he commenced reading a tale of which the scene was laid in the days of Nero, the tyrant of Rome, and the malignant persecutor of the Christians.

Chapter II

Proud, imperial Rome!

The withering wing of Time has swept o'er all your splendor,
Your stately palaces, where once the tyrant held his midnight revels,
The amphitheatre, which echoed with the groans of martyred Christians,
And the triumphalt Arch, where passed, in haughty pride, the victor,
Where, in dark despair, strode on the vanquished monarchs,
All alike have felt the blighting pressure.

It was on a bright and beautiful evening, just as the delightful sun of Italy was declining, that Cleone, a young Roman maiden, walked with her mother along the pleasant banks of the Tiber. They had chosen a retired walk for many reasons, one of which was that retirement better suited their dispositions, and another that Rome was, at that time, filled with a dissolute nobility, whose wills were almost their only law. Cleone and her mother were descendants of ancient and noble families, who had counted amongst their numbers grave and influential senators, warlike and victorious soldiers, and even mingled their blood with the powerful kings and dictators of Rome; but time, with its changing scenes, had reduced them in power and wealth, though oppression and poverty had not taken from them the proud consciousness of former greatness. "My daughter," said the matron, "look at that glorious sun, though declining, though its splendor will shortly be obscured, yet it will rise again, with renewed and more brilliant light, and shed joy and happiness with its glad beams. So, dearest, shall the sun of our fortunes, though now almost disappearing, again rise, and the virtues of our own Curtius pour light and warmth on all within their influence. Believe this, my own Cleone, and let the thought disperse those clouds of melancholy, believe that your mother is a prophetess, and this time of good." "Mother," said Cleone, "I will try to have faith in your augury, but my brother is in a prison, in the power of a tyrant; how can we hope?" "He is under the protecting power of that Being in whom we trust, who has comforted us in affliction, and preserved us in danger, and who will not now forsake us. He, whose power can melt the flinty rock, can soften even the hard heart of

a Nero. Do you remember, Cleone, the deathbed of your father, when, laying his hand on the youthful head of our Curtius, after commending us to his love and protection, he blessed him in the name of the only living and true God. 'Even,' said he, 'though called to the death of a martyr, let him never forsake the God of his father.' The prayer of the dying saint has been heard; midst temptations, in the view of danger and death the undaunted youth has never been shaken in his fidelity to his God, and by his noble courage has forced even the haughty tyrant and his minions to respect." "Oh, that I could restore him to you, dear mother. Last night I woke from disturbed slumber; the bright beams of the moon rested upon my couch, all was calm and still, the very air breathed peace, but the thought of my darling brother, shut out from all this loveliness, and exposed to the unwholesome damps of a dungeon, weighed heavy upon my mind. I threw myself upon my knees, I prayed God that he would save him from the cruel Emperor. Oh, mother, I did not again lie down until peace and comfort entered my mind, and I felt that if he lived or died, I could say, 'Thy Holy will be done,' but mother, I cannot always say so." Thus communing they had arrived at a lovely spot, surrounded by trees whose luxuriant foliage almost touched the ground. Here they seated themselves upon the bank; the beautiful appearance of the river, as the bright sky was reflected upon the waters, the songs of the birds over their heads, the buzzing of innumerable insects, and the hum of the city, softened by distance, tranquillized their minds. "My Cleone, join your voice to this chorus, and sing our evening hymn." Obedient to her mother's wish, she sang, with sweet melody, the simple strain:

The shades of night are closing o'er us,
  God of Heaven, watch our sleep!
For the sake of the Lord Jesus
  Wilt thou still thy servants keep?
Lord! though dangers may surround us,
  We are safe beneath thy care,
Thy blest angels may attend us;
  Holy Father, bow thine ear!

As the low, sweet voice of Cleone died upon the air, a slight rustling of the bushes startled them and, turning quickly, they beheld a woman whose fixed and earnest gaze was riveted upon them. Leaning upon a staff, enveloped in a dark gray mantle, the hood of which covered her head, she appeared lost in thought. Her grey locks and the deep furrows of her face betokened ex-

treme age, while her eyes, black, deep-set and piercing, showed that her mind still retained its powers. Her attention seemed fixed upon Cleone, whose countenance expressed terror at her unexpected appearance. "Lady," said she, and her deep and hollow voice sounded as from the tomb, "do not fear; your voice has awakened feelings which I thought long since dead. Years of sin and misery seemed like a dream as I listened, and a youth of innocence and love was present to my thought. Thanks, maiden, for the momentary trance. Scion of the noble house of Curiatii, a dark cloud hangs heavy over your fortunes; He in whom you trust can disperse it. The gray moss waves on the lofty towers of the Atili, but their stones are yet firm and unbroken; the stately pine is decaying, but the young sapling is yet vigorous, and its shoots will press upward, the lamp of life glimmers but faintly in the breast of the aged, and will soon be extinguished, yet a bright spark remains in the young and noble to rekindle the ancient blaze. Lady, hearken to the prophecy of one who, though sinful and despairing, forgets not the remnant of the illustrious house that reared her childhood." "You are unhappy, mother," said the matron in the soothing tone of kindness, "but you must not say despairing. He who has offered up his life for us, who has borne our sins upon the cross, has left us the blessed assurance that all who repent need not despair." "Aye," said the Sybil, while a strong shudder shook her frame, "you are a Christian; enough," and her eyes gleamed with almost terrific wildness; "away," and, waving her hand, she disappeared among the trees. A moment of deep silence succeeded her departure, which was broken by Cleone. "Is not this frightful, mother? Who can this women be? and does she mean us good or evil?" "Her words would seem to imply good to us, my daughter, but dark and, I fear, unrepented wickedness burthens her mind, benighted indeed, if without the cheering ray of hope. Who she is I know not; tradition tells of those who have leagued themselves with the powers of darkness, but there was kindness in her words; let us think of her no more, my dearest, but quickly retrace our steps. We have already left our kind uncle too long." "Ah, we will not linger, dear mother, he is so feeble." The twilight deepened around them as they bent their way to their home, but the moon was rising in unclouded splendor and its mild beams diffused a brilliancy around the landscape more beautiful than that of day. "How many, my Cleone, have listened to the murmur of these waves and watched the reflection of these moonbeams; how many noble and gifted beings whom we have been taught to love and admire, have, perhaps upon this very spot, gazed upon this same lovely scene. This same quiet and spark-

ling sky has shone upon the form of many a noble Roman whose heart was devoted to his country. Time moves on in his never-resting course and, centuries hence, my daughter, this river will roll on, as it now does, this sky sparkle with the same brilliancy, and beings, within whose forms the current of life flows as warmly as it now does in ours, will watch the unceasing motion of this stream and admire this pure and lovely firmament as we do."

The family of the Curiatii, once powerful in Rome, was now represented by the young Quintius Curtius and his sister; civil wars and oppressions had reduced their numbers and torn from them their possessions and these, the last of an illustrious race, were even dependent upon the charity of an almost superannuated old man, the uncle of his mother. Their father, while serving in the Roman bands in Judea, had become a convert to Christianity and, while his children were yet young, had died in the full faith of the Christian's hope, bequeathing them, as he believed, a rich legacy, in commending them to that Being who has said: "Leave thy fatherless children to me," and, with a firm confidence that their mother would educate them in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." Most faithfully had that tender mother redeemed her pledge to her dying husband, and, with a noble fortitude, she had endured every privation and cheerfully made every sacrifice for the eternal welfare of those beloved children, and with that joy which only the Christian parent can feel, she had seen them, while growing in their loveliness, devoting themselves to the service of the God of their father. Who has not shuddered at the atrocious cruelties of the reign of Nero? The wicked tyrant, whose greatest happiness seemed to consist in causing the misery of his fellow-beings, and where is the heart that has not beat in sympathy with the sufferings of those Christian martyrs, who, with a firm and unshaken constancy, endured the torments inflicted by that monster in human form, even until death, rather than deny the "Lord who bought them." Educated in retirement, the young Curtius had for some time escaped notice, but as he grew in years and, through the influence of friends, had been introduced into public life, he was no longer shielded by obscurity. In his noble countenance was portrayed his high and commanding talents and vice and wickedness shrank abashed from the quick glance of his eye. Is it, then, to be wondered that he became an object of dislike to the infamous emperor and that the cruel tyrant sought an excuse to gratify his feelings of hatred, for, without an excuse, even Nero dared not attack the virtuous young Roman who was equally the object of love and admiration. That excuse was not long wanting, for

the undaunted youth feared not to confess Christ before men, and that alone was crime of the deepest dye in the Pagan court of Nero. Summoned before the emperor, his firm yet respectful deportment and calm and decided answers commanded the admiration of all, even of the tyrant himself, who, with the strange inconsistency of his character, could even admire and applaud where he hated and had determined to destroy. But it would be greater matter of triumphs to Nero to induce the high-souled Curtius to renounce his religion than to take his life and, therefore, summoning to his aid those bland and persuasive manners he could so well assume, he, during many interviews, attempted to sap the foundation of that virtue, which was based upon a principle, enduring as eternity, till, finding every effort ineffectual, his rage knew no bounds, and the young Christian was closely confined, debarred from the sight of his mother and sister, and only respited until the imperial ruffian had contrived new modes of torture to enhance the bitterness of death. But, although cast into the dreariest dungeon, and apparently deprived of every comfort, this son of a sainted father was not only resigned to his fate, but even triumphant in the thoughts of martyrdom, and, though deprived of the sight of those friends so dear to his heart, felt a sweet serenity in the conviction that he was the object of their fervent prayers and fondest solicitude. Who can estimate the unspeakable consolation he derived from the invisible presence of that Saviour who has promised, "I will never leave you comfortless," who has said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"You will read more, you will not leave off yet, Herbert," said Charles. "Our time is expended," said Herbert, "and, in order to enjoy pleasure, we must not prolong it until it becomes wearisome." "Wearisome!" said Susan, "we should not even think of the idea." "I could almost wish," said Elizabeth, "to have been one of the first Christians, even amidst all their dangers. Such firm confidence, such joyful hope, and holy love would seem cheaply gained by all their sufferings." "I almost believe," said Mary, "that placed in their situation, I, too, could have risen above fear; that I could almost rejoice to die in such a cause." "Their situation was indeed peculiar," said Mrs. Wilson. "The power of God was with them and supported them. He was their refuge and strength, their present help, therefore they did not fear. Left to our own weakness we are as nothing, supported by his mighty arm, we are powerful, invincible." "My curiosity," said Susan, "is much excited by the old woman, and I shall like to find out who she is." "You called her a Sybil, Herbert," said

Charles. "There is a story in my History of Rome of a woman who went to one of the kings to sell some mysterious books, which he refused to purchase. She went away and burned some, then came back and asked the same price for those remaining, and continued to do so till she had burned a good many, and, at last, the king bought those that were left, and they were considered of so much value that officers were appointed to take care of them and they were consulted upon all important matters." "You are right, Charles," said Herbert, "there is such a relation, and perhaps we may class this amongst the romance of history. Time and the mists of tradition have rendered it impossible to learn how much truth is connected with these fables, but we know that in the ancient days of Rome, much reliance was placed upon those who pretended to a knowledge of future events, and, perhaps, the general belief in such knowledge induced many of wild imaginations to believe themselves endowed with this prophetic spirit. You may suppose, Susan, if you wish, to break the illusions of fancy that this ancient female was one of those fanatical beings, who had cheated herself into the belief that she was set apart as one of those mystical oracles." "Oh, no," said Susan, "do not break any illusions; I am very willing to believe that she was the identical Sybil, who offered those books to the refractory king." "Your imagination, dear cousin," said he, "has indeed taken a wide circuit, and we will let the curtain of mystery be spread, for the present, over the story."

Chapter III

There is a spot, dearer than all beside;
A spot where all the joys of life abide;
Where sweet affections cluster round the heart,
Where peace and love their purest hopes impart;
That spot is Home—

Call you this Death? 'Tis Life, immortal Life.

The duties of the succeeding day were not neglected, though even the short day seemed longer in anticipation of the evening employments. Cowper has given a delightful description of the "ushering in" of a winter evening with all its pleasant accompaniments, and the truth of his lively picture was fully realized as the happy group collected around the sparkling fire. As Herbert continued the tale which had so interested them all listened with attention.

"The tender mother and much loved sister had arrived at the home now rendered solitary by the absence of the son and brother, whose love had sweetened every passing hour. As they approached the mansion of their aged relative, upon whose ancient towers the moon now cast a silvery brightness, and had ascended the eminence upon which it was situated, they stood for a moment to contemplate the scene before them. There lay the proud and magnificent city, its domes and palaces reflecting the soft brightness, and, here, the waves of the Tiber rolled at their feet, its winding course lost in the distance. On their right hand and strongly defined by the light, towered the imperial palace where abode the haughty arbiter of the fate of their Curtius, and, on their left stretched that Amphitheatre, the scene of the most horrid cruelties, drenched with the blood of martyred victims and strewn with their ashes. One thought seemed to possess their minds, one terrible reflection to agitate their bosoms, as they turned, shuddering, from this last prospect and bent their steps toward their dwelling.

"In a spacious but low apartment, bearing marks of ancient magnificence, but lighted by only a solitary lamp, lay reclined upon a couch the kind but feeble old man, so long their protector and sole friend, but now sinking by age and sorrow, for he had seen many endeared to him by the most sacred associations suf-

fering cruel tortures and an ignominious death for Christ's sake, and amongst them the holy apostle Paul, from whose lips he had first heard the truth proclaimed, "as it is in Jesus." This stroke had bowed him to the earth, and, although bending in submission to the will of his Maker, his frame had yielded and he was fast hastening to his rest. The untiring watchfulness of faithful love hovered around him, smoothed his pillow and delighted in presenting to his rapt attention the joys of heaven. The walls of that apartment, which had formerly echoed with mirth and revelry, with the heavy tramp of the warrior preparing for battle against the enemies of Rome, or with the commanding voice of the Dictator, issuing mandates to his subjects, now gave back but the heavy breathing of one of the last of their descendants, a feeble old man, but in whose exhausted body dwelt a spark of ethereal fire unknown to them with all their boasted power and splendor. This feeble old man was a Christian. Near him sat a faithful domestic, watching over him in the absence of her mistress with earnest solicitude. As the matron entered the room and bent over him with anxious love, he raised his eyes and a smile of affection passed over his features. 'Welcome, dearest daughter," said he. 'I am weary of your absence; time passes heavily when I do not see those forms so dear to my heart. Where is Cleone?' 'Here, dearest father. You are not worse, I trust. Here is your own Cleone.' 'Ah, sweet child, those tones would almost recall me to life, were it indeed deserting this time-worn body; but why do I not see my Curtius? Why is he so long absent? Speak, Octavia; say, Cleone, where is Curtius?' A look of deep distress shaded their countenances, for with sedulous care they had concealed from him the situation of that darling boy who had been, from his earliest youth, the delight of his heart. "Think not, dear father, that, though absent, he forgets you. Oh, no; his messages are full of love and fond remembrance and we will pray that the Lord will restore him to us in his own good time.' 'May the blessing of his father's God rest upon him and you, dear children. Ah,' said he, partly addressing those around him and partly uttering his own thoughts, 'I could almost wish that I might live, if it were the will of God, to witness his bright career of glory, dispensing happiness and prosperity over our country and turning the hearts of the people from the worship of their heathen deities to that of the true God. Say, dear daughter, may we not believe that those ties which unite us on earth will continue in heaven, nay, even grow stronger through eternity?' 'Father, I cannot doubt it; it is the consoling hope of the Christian.' 'Aye, I shall there meet your father, my Cleone; perhaps we shall be permitted to watch over those so beloved

upon earth.' 'Oh, father!' said Cleone, 'would that we might all go together.' 'Not so, dearest, you have yet much, I trust, to do in this world.' He lay silent for some time, apparently in deep meditation; then, raising himself upon his couch and clasping his trembling hands, he said: 'How long, O Lord, holy and just, shall this fair land be polluted by these abominations? The blood of thy servants has been poured out like water; grant, O Father, that it may call to Thee from the ground, not for vengeance, but for mercy upon the murderers! And the time will come,' said he, his whole countenance glowing with the animation of youth, 'the time is not far distant when Rome in her splendor shall bow before the cross of Jesus; when her haughty Emperors shall prostrate themselves before the Christian's God, and her temples, now blazing with golden honors to Pagan divinities, shall echo with prayers and thanksgivings to the God of the whole earth.' And he fell back upon his pillow, overpowered by the exulting emotions of his mind, a glow of triumphant joy still rested upon his features and even retained its station there after the heart, which had exulted in this vision of futurity, had ceased to beat and the tongue which had uttered the inspiring prophecy had become mute in death; for, even as the fervent 'Amen' lingered upon the lips of those around him, the spirit left its decayed tenement and returned to God who gave it."

Herbert ceased reading and a solemn stillness prevailed for a few moments, when he repeated the following lines.

Through death's dark and shadowy valley
  He, the Lord, shall be thy guide;
He, thy Saviour, true and holy
  Christians shall with thee abide;
Light shall break upon the darkness,
  Strength from Him thy steps sustain,
Mighty power support they weakness,
  Joy and hope remove all pain.
Hark! what strains of rapturous pleasure
  Greet thee from they home above;
Christian, blessings without measure
  Wait thee in that world of love.

"There is more time, yet, dear brother," said Charles, and Herbert continued:

"In a splendid apartment, adorned with all the luxury of luxurious Rome, and showing, by its magnificence, that it was the abode

of a patrician of the first order, was seated at a table a Roman citizen, evidently of high rank. Rich wines were before him, and many and deep were his libations while engaged in earnest conversation with a young noble, who was walking the apartment with an anxious hurried step. "Nay, my Flavius," said the one who was seated, "you are too zealous in this matter. I marvel much at the change in your appearance; but a short time ago you were the life of our society; but now, by Bacchus, how you are altered; even this sparkling Falernian tempts you not, and your wit and brilliancy, which was the zest of our pleasure, is all vanished. Come, my friend, throw aside this gloom, I pray you, and, as for the young Curtius, we will see what can be done, we will see. He deserves punishment for adhering to his gloomy doctrine, though, for your sake, we will see what can be effected. Still, it is a labor of Hercules to attempt to change the purposes of our mighty Emperor when he has the pleasure of torturing one of these obtinate Christians in view." "Do not talk of delay, noble Galba," said the young man, "after witnessing the last scene between the Emperor and Curtius, are you not convinced no time is to be lost? Preparations are even now making for some exhibition on the morrow, and, I fear me, this heroic youth is to be the principal actor in a most cruel tragedy. Servius, you have much influence over this cruel Nero, will you not exert it to save this last descendant of an illustrious house? Will not our cheeks crimson with shame when we look upon those palaces, reared by his ancestors, when we pass the memorable spot, where the first Curtius devoted himself to his country? If we suffer this scion from such a glorious stock to perish thus? And, for what? Powers of heaven! Why has he not the same right to worship his God, as we have to bend before the shrine of Jupiter or Bacchus? He is a Roman citizen, and shielded by that name should be guarded by the laws of Rome, for he has committed no crime." "No crime! Flavius, by the immortal Gods, you are beside yourself. It is well there is no one present to bear this report to Nero. Your life, my friend, were not worth a straw. No crime, did you say, to condemn our Deities? Speak lower, I pray you, our walls are not thick enough to conceal such a monstrous sentiment." "Nay, Galba, this is trifling," and a shade of deep vexation passed over the fine features of Flavius. "Will you use your power over the Emperor to save my friend, or have I overrated your friendship for me?" "You have overrated my influence with Nero. 'Tis true, he fears, but he also hates me, and, for the same cause, because he believes me a favorite with the soldiery, but, in this case, he will heed me little, I fear, for he knows he has the popular voice on his side, when he punishes these Christians, and,

because he hates them with a hatred as deadly as can be cherished in the human breast." "And what have they done to incur his hatred? Can it be on account of the conflagration in the city?" "No. For it is more than suspected that our imperial master himself caused those fires to be kindled. No, Flavius, the destruction of the whole city would not have planted in his selfish breast such a deep and malignant spite. I will tell you the whole story, for it was while you were in Britain the circumstance occurred, though I think you must have heard of the beautiful Valeria." "I have. She was the favorite of the Emperor." "Favorite is too cold a world, my Flavius. All the love and kindly feelings that ever found a place in the breast of the tyrant were lavished upon her. Her word was his law. Her slightest wish was gratified, and most nobly did she use her power. Was a petition for mercy offered to the Emperor, Valeria was the first to second it; was an heroic achievement to be rewarded, Valeria's hand hastened to bestow the prize; her gentle influence hushed to repose the stormy and malignant passions rising in the breast of Nero, and Rome vainly exalted in the belief that their young ruler's heart was filled with heaven's own attribute, mercy, for it was reported at one time, when a warrant for the execution of a criminal was presented to him, for his signature, he shed tears, and wished he had never learned to write. Aye, this very tyrant, whom we now see surrounded by fawning parasites, and furiously sacrificing all who dare oppose or obstruct his vile inclinations, was then, or pretended to be, such an enemy to flattery, that he severely reprimanded the Senate for amending the wisdom of his measures saying, 'Keep your approbation till I deserve it.'" "But, Valeria," said the young noble, "how did she lose her hold upon his affections?" "Some of her relatives or friends, I believe, had become Christians, and pursuaded her to hear the preaching of one of that sect, an extraordinary man, who pretended to be inspired by a Superior Being, and who was known by the appellation of the holy Paul. She was taught by him to believe that she was committing great wickedness by living with the Emperor, and secretly quitted the palace, leaving behind her all the costly gifts of the tyrant, and devoting herself to a life of prayer. From that moment the rage of the Emperor against this fanatical sect has known no bounds, and to avow one's self a Christian is enough to draw down his fiercest indignation." "And what has become of this female? How is it that she has not fallen a victim to this indignation?" "Her retreat has not been discovered, although every means has been employed, and, it is said, that Nero has frequently offered pardon and wealth to the victims of his hatred, if they would confess where she might be

found, but in vain, for a spirit of determined obstinacy seems to be the pervading sentiment of these Galileans. Now, with this feeling of stern revenge which still rankles in his breast, what chance, think you, is there, that he will extend mercy to this young man?" "But," said he, seeing the distress which overspread the countenance of Flavius, "my endeavors shall not be wanting. I will own to you, Flavius," he continued, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, "I hate this inhuman tyrant, the blood of my ancestors boils within me when I reflect upon the degeneracy of Rome, and I have imagined that the statues of our forefathers frown upon us, as the empty pageants which please his low and vulgar mind pass our polluted streets. Are we indeed so base as to submit to the degradation of bending our knee, in servile adulation, before this mockery of royalty? Did he possess one redeeming quality, one noble virtue, we might, under that, shelter our pulsillanimity, but, by the shade of Brutus, we have nought to excuse us in our mean endurance of his vile caprices. But a few weeks have passed since our venerable Senators, even in that chamber, rendered sacred by the associations, hallowed in the heart of every true Roman, were obliged to sanction the admittance of his favorite horse to the Consulship. By the memory of those most revered," said the excited Roman, starting from his seat, "this shall not be borne!"

The countenance of the young Flavius had reflected the indignant emotions of the elder speaker, and the deep flush upon his cheek expressed his sense of the degradation of his country. "Servius Galba," he said, in the same subdued, but earnest tone, "point but the way to relieve Rome of this disgrace, and I will be the first to follow it." "Enough," said Galba, "the path shall be opened; yes, by the guardian deities of our city, the despicable tyrant shall yet lick the dust he has polluted, but, my purpose is in embryo, and I had not thought to say so much, but with you, noble Flavius, the secret is safe, you shall know more in due time; perhaps the moment of our deliverance may be nearer than I thought." "In the meantime," said the young noble, "I may rely upon your intercession for my friend?" "You may," said he, "I will see Nero without delay," and Flavius left the apartment with an awakened hope for the deliverance of his friend, for he believed Nero would not dare resist the request of Servius Sulspicus Galba, the favorite of the powerful soldiery of Rome, and one of her most popular citizens. Quitting the splendid palace of the patrician, he passed hastily through the streets, until he arrived at the large and gloomy building whose walls enclosed the devoted young Christian, who had become endeared to him by his virtues, and by that strong tie which binds congenial hearts.

Armed soldiers were stationed around, but no opposition was offered to the entrance of Lucius Flavius. Descending the stone staircase, and proceeding rapidly through the narrow passages, he arrived before the cell where he encountered a sentinel, who, with respect, opposed his farther progress. An order, he said, had been received from the Emperor, prohibiting all further intercourse with the prisoner. "That order, my friend, cannot refer to me. Come, my good fellow, allow me to enter for a few moments, and here is where withal to pass many a merry hour." Half believing that the young Roman was exempted from the prohibition, and strongly tempted by the glittering bribe, the soldier, after some hesitation, withdrew the bolts, and permitted him to enter.

"Now, my little brother," said Herbert, "I must call upon you for a display of self-denial, which you will, perhaps, think too great. Our mother's business requires my absence for a few days; it is a pleasure to me to read the story with you, and if you will conclude to delay the interest you take in its progress until my return, we can then share it together; shall it be so?" It would be difficult to determine whose countenance was most overclouded, Susan's or Charles's. "Oh, certainly we will wait," said Charles, "but I am so sorry, and, how long shall you be away, Herbert?" "Tomorrow is Saturday," said Herbert. "I will endeavor to be at home on Wednesday, and you know, Charles, the Sabbath evening intervenes, when I should not read." "Do not despair, dear Charles," said his mother. "I think we may pass away the time profitably and pleasantly." But notwithstanding this prediction, the cloud had not dispersed when they retired for the night.

The morning dawned, but not with its usual splendor. Dark and heavy clouds lowered around the horizon, and many were the signs foretelling a stormy day, but, as Herbert's first stage was only about eight miles, the gloomy weather did not prevent his journey. Towards afternoon, the storm set in with violence, and every gloomy prognostic, so well known to those who live near the ocean, was verified. As evening drew on, Susan stood at a window, watching the wild motion of the waves, and listening to their uproar. "Are there not frequent shipwrecks upon this coast, dear aunt?" said she. "There has been but one within my recollection," said Mrs. Wilson; "a vessel, manned principally, I believe, with seaman from Scotland, was driven from its course by a terrible storm, and dashed upon the rocks. The bodies of seven men were found upon the beach in the morning, and only

one living being to lament the loss of his companions. Afterwards, fire or six more were washed on shore, and they were all interred with respect and due solemnity in the public burying ground, the solitary survivor attending as chief mourner."

Chapter IV

The sounding tempest roars, the foaming waves
Lash round the rugged coast; amid the howl
Of raging winds is heard the signal gun
Warning of danger and distress.

The thick curtains were drawn around the windows, excluding the sight, if not the sound, of the tempest without, and the cheerful group again encircled their warm and glowing fire, but much lamenting the absence of Herbert. Charles, with much animation, informed his mother that everything was well sheltered from the storm. "Philip has shut up old Brindle, snug and warm," said he, "and I have helped him fill Robin's crib." "That is well, my good boy," said his mother, "and now, after taking good care of your dependents, you can enjoy the comforts of a pleasant fireside." Susan now recurred to the circumstance of the shipwreck and Mrs. Wilson read part of a little poem written on the occasion.

" 'T'will be a wild and fearful night, mark the dark, rugged
clouds;
Now Heaven protect the mariners who hang upon the shrouds,"
So spake the aged fisherman, as with a careful hand
He well secured his little boat from parting from the land.
"Look, boy, if there's a ship in sight, my mind misgives me sore,
That many a stout, brave heart now beats that soon shall beat no
more."
"Why, Grandsire, always when it storms," replied the thoughtless
lad,
You think about the sailor-men, and feel so very bad.
There's not a single ship in sight, and it is true enough
I hope there is none near our coast, the weather is so rough.
I should like to be a sailor if it always would be fair,
But in a frightful storm like this I think I should not dare."
And now they left the stormy beach and gained their lowly home.
Behind a sheltering hill it stood, secluded and alone.
A warm, bright blaze illumined the little window of the room,
And, at their steps, a smiling face peeped out into the storm.
"Grandsire and Willie both have come," said a playful little voice,
"Come in out of the wind and rain, now mother will rejoice.
We've got a very charming fire, and I have parched some corn

And there is nothing now to do but sit down and be warm."
Her grandsire kissed her rosy cheek and with a merry air
Her brother dropped his dripping hat upon her glossy hair.
They gathered round the cheerful fire and while the sullen gale
Swept mournful by, sat listening to many a piteous tale
Which the old grandsire told of days long past and gone,
When a stout and hardy sailor he had weathered many a storm;
And down the gentle mother's cheek stole many a silent tear,
While for her absent sailor boy her heart throbbed quick with fear.
For, far away to foreign lands, her eldest one had sailed,
And oft for fear in such a storm her loving heart had failed.
The stormy wind howled fearfully around their lowly home,
The angry waves dashed on the beach their sheets of glistening foam.
That beach, whose shining sands reflect the sun's bright sparkling ray,
Is hid from sight amidst the dark, wild, blinding spray.
"Lord, let thy holy will be done," the pious old man said,
As calm he bent his knees in prayer before he sought his bed,
Though fearful were the stormy blasts and loud the billows' roar,
As gathering yet new strength they fiercely beat upon the shore,
Yet, midst the wild and fearful din sweet sleep with visions bright
Hovered around their peaceful couch throughout that stormy night.
And in hope's glowing rosy tints painted the blissful hour
When once again the wanderer's feet shall cross his mother's door.
Far o'er that raging ocean and amidst old Scotia's hills,
Ah, many a kind and loving heart that night with rapture thrills,
As Hope, delusive, marks the time when prosperous and gay
Their absent loved ones shall return from o'er the distant sea;
That wished-for time will never come, for on New England's coast
The gallant ship is 'midst the storm and howling tempest lost;
And while the mother and the wife are dreaming of the hour
That to their home the much-loved son and husband will restore.
The wind with loud and frightful roar drowns their last dying cry
And 'mid the wild and dashing waves is spent their latest sigh.

"I like the ballad style of poetry," said Mary; "it is so natural and so many little incidents may be introduced which touch the feelings and delight the fancy." "I am an admirer of poetry," said Mrs. Wilson, "but I have not patience to read much of the sickly sentiment, dignified by that name, which is beginning to be the style of the present day, and I much prefer the old English ballad, with all its homely simplicity."

After a pleasant and lively conversation the evening was closed and they retired.

The storm had gradually subsided during the night and the morning sun shone clear. The turbulent waves had receded from the shining sands, a fresh and mild breeze dispersed every vapor and the Sabbath morning, in all its calm and peaceful stillness, was again welcomed. There is no feeling more delightful to one whose taste is in unison with it than the lovely quiet of a peaceful Sabbath morning. Even nature seems hushed, the wind lulled into more tranquil murmurs, and the notes of the birds on a summer day sound sweeter and more subdued. After the breakfast table was arranged in due order Philip and Phoebe presented themselves in their Sunday attire and smiling faces, prepared to join the family in listening to the reading of the Bible, and the day was spent in the usual Sabbath duties. "Mother," said Charles, "I liked the sermon this afternoon very much because it was about Ruth." "It is a story of much interest," said Mrs. Wilson, "and read in connection with other parts of the Bible, of much profit." "Was the country of the Moabites very rich and fertile at that time?" "There is no doubt of it, my son, but it is now accursed of God and almost deserted by man. Formerly it was a land abounding in wealth and all the luxuries of life, and through its thickly populated country ran a high road where were continually passing immense caravans loaded with rich merchandise, and travellers from different nations, thus distributing wealth throughout the whole territory. But the sound of trade and commerce has long since died upon its borders, the once fruitful soil no longer yields its treasures, and the wandering Bedouin gains but a miserable subsistence amidst its sandy deserts, which now echo only the heavy trot of his camels. We can hardly recognize in the description of late travelers the land of plenty which gave refuge to the famished Bethlehemites. I will read you a few lines of a poem entitled "Ruth."

"Where Moab's fertile plains once lay, in glowing beauty dressed,
Now spreads a dreary, barren waste, far as the eye can rest.
There, where a nation flourished once in plenty and repose,
Scarce for the hardy camels' feed, a scanty herbage grows.
And o'er that sandy desert roams the Arab, fierce and wild,
Where dwelt in peace the Moabite, and verdant meadows smiled.
Thy pride, O haughty nation, has thy sure destruction wrought,
And o'er thy once fair, happy land deep misery has brought.
Where are your haughty sovereigns, your luxurious people,
where?
Your conquering armies, riches, splendor, mighty power?

All, all are gone, amidst thy temples creep the briars and the
Thorn,
And deadly serpents hiss among thy palaces forlorn."

"It has been a very pleasant Sabbath, dear Aunt," said Mary, "so peaceful and quiet." "I like to remember the Sabbaths of my youthful days," said Mrs. Wilson. "Let me repeat some lines referring to them and you will remember, dear, that in those days lived many of our old Puritan ministers, so many of whom have now gone to their rest."

SABBATH MORNING.

"How memory paints
That hallowed morn, in youth's bright, happy hours!
The glorious sun seemed brighter, and the birds
Sang sweeter on that sacred day; the flowers,
Rich in their fragrance, seemed more fragrant then;
A holy quiet rested o'er the scene;
The week-day hum was hushed, no jarring sound
Disturbed the placid stillness of the hour;
The voices, which, with joyous glee, oft made
The well remembered walls echo again,
Are gentle and subdued, and even the dog,
The faithful guardian of our rights, seems now
Content to waive his noisy privilege
And, stretched at length upon the sunny step,
Blinks at the buzzing flies. In fair array
Our little flock are watching the deep tone
Of the old bell, to summon them to prayer;
But now, no longer on its ancient seat,
Rests the old church; 'tis gone; its tunnel roof,
Its reverend porches, and its shining spire
All gone; and only memory's fond dream
Is shadowing forth its antique lineaments."

After retiring for the night, "Well," said Mary, "what has become of our sad forebodings for the winter?" "Do not say *our* forebodings, dear sister, they were *mine*, and I am heartily ashamed of my discontented repinings. I never worked or studied with so much interest, and since the letter arrived informing us of the great improvement in our father's health, I have been perfectly happy." "I never knew," said Mary, "the full meaning of our old theme before:

"Home is the resort
Of peace and plenty, where, supporting and supported,
Polished friends and dear relations mingle into bliss."

Chapter V

Listening thro' the winter eve
To deeds of long past years, when the fierce Goths
Invaded Italy; over her lovely plains
Poured war and devastation; or the sad tale
Of Christian martyrs, faithful to the death.

The love of nature, with its sublime and beautiful prospects, should be sedulously cultivated in the youthful mind from the first dawn of reason. The love of reading will be the necessary consequence, and this, well directed, is one of the greatest blessings of life. For one whose cultivated imagination is delighted with descriptions of natural scenery and who is interested in the history of past ages will not often seek the haunts of dissipation for amusement. From studying and loving the rich and varied landscape of nature he is led to the contemplation of "Nature's God," and in the formation of the humblest insect and the rich coloring of the lowliest flower, as well as in the mightiest work of creation, will acknowledge the great Creator. Happy they whose ductile minds are thus early directed and whose maturer judgment confirms them in the sure road to peace.

The return of Herbert was hailed with joy by the assembled household and the succeeding evening he fulfilled his promise of continuing the Tale of the Early Christians.

Seated at a table in a gloomy apartment, lighted by a solitary lamp, whose ray disclosed the damp and rugged walls, with the certain prospect of a cruel death before him, and denied even the solace of a last farewell to his dearest friends, would it have been wonderful if the countenance of the lonely prisoner, which was raised at the entrance of Flavius, should have expressed a deep and settled gloom, or even the stern despair of one who had bidden adieu to hope. There are those who possess a controlling power over their emotions, who, even in moments of strong agitation or excitement, from motives of pride, or the desire of applause, or some other powerful incentive, will prevent those emotions from being discovered by assuming a calm and stoical exterior, but, it was not the haughty pride of the stoic, or the cool apathy of the philosopher, who has schooled his feelings into indifference, which met the eye of Flavius, as he encountered the serene glance of his friend. The noble brow of Curtius was

placid as a sleeping infant's, his brilliant eye reflected the heavenly peace which reigned within, and the smile of welcome with which he greeted the entrance of his friend was such as we might fancy adorned the lips of an inhabitant of the regions of undisturbed happiness. "This is indeed kind, my friend, my brother," said he, and as he rose and extended his hand. Flavius perceived that his limbs were shackled. "Barbarous tyrant," said the indignant youth, "is not his malice yet complete? Must these chains be added to the measure of his cruelty?" "Waste not a thought, my Flavius, they are proofs of Nero's consideration for his poor prisoner, credentials by which he may claim a heavenly residence, as being made to follow in the footsteps of his Master. Tomorrow, I am told, is the day of my triumph." "Curtius," said his agitated friend, "all hope is not lost, Galba has promised his powerful intercession; it cannot fail." "It will fail, Flavius; as well might you lure the tiger from his prey as induce the Emperor to release a Christian from torture and from death." "And you contemplate this prospect with calmness; nay, you are even joyful in it?" "Mistake me not, my friend, life has its charms, the prospect of death, its mighty terrors; think you I can contemplate with indifference the dreary grave shutting out the bright loveliness of nature, separating me from those who are dearer to me than existence, and closing my ear to the sweet accents of affection? Not so; but the chilling shudder of these reflections is checked by the image of Him who suffered the pangs of death that we might live forever. Far through the gloomy perspective of the grave, I see the cheering, the delightful, prospect of immortal life, of a reunion with those beloved ones, an eternal reunion, and a rapturous vision of joys which eye hath not seen, and before which the momentary pangs of death dwindle into nothing. Believe me, my Flavius, were it possible for Nero to know the all-absorbing joy which fills my heart at these anticipations, he would revoke his decree, as the severest way of punishment. But," said he, and the animated flush faded from his countenance and the hand which clasped that of Flavius, pressed it in agitation, "death has indeed its bitterness when I think of the defenceless ones I shall leave behind." "Curtius," said his friend, "nothing that human means can effect to save you shall be neglected. But, if all shall fail, give me, my friend, my brother, give me your sanction to become the son of your mother; the husband of your sister, and, whilst I have life, their happiness shall be my dearest object." Curtius was silent for a moment, at length, "Flavius," said he, "the husband of Cleone must be a Christian." "And if a full conviction and belief that the God whom you worship is the only true God, if a deep and

mortifying sense of the degraded nature of our faith, and a longing desire to possess that trust and heavenly peace which you possess, is to be a Christian, then am I one, but it is a hard thing to give up the religion of our fathers, and I feel that I have not courage to avow these sentiments, and to stem the torrent of execration which will be poured upon me." "But the time will come, my Flavius, when you will avow the God of the Christians to be your God. Victory, victory," said the youth, "the temples of these Pagan deities will yet be consecrated to the service of the living God, and the incense which rests in clouds, upon their shrines, will rise in pure and grateful offering to the Holy One of Israel; yes, my friend, I bequeath to you the dearest treasures I possess; be to them a faithful guardian, and the blessing of the Lord rest upon you." The eloquent countenance of the young noble expressed the thanks he began to pour forth, when the door was thrown open, and the sentinel proclaimed that he must leave the dungeon, as an express to that effect had been received from the captain of the guard. No delay could be granted, and after a fervent embrace the friends parted, as Curtius firmly believed, for the last time. Left alone and relieved from many anxious thoughts, his mind now turned to the awful scenes of the morrow. No torments, he well knew, would be too agonizing or too horrid for the implacable Nero to invent, none too dreadful for his minions to execute, but his firm and disciplined mind had been too long accustomed to view death as the portal to never ending happiness, to shrink now from its near approach, even arrayed in its utmost terrors. Bending over the table, his thoughts became absorbed in the bright prospect of future glory, fervent aspirations of gratitude to God for raising an earthly protector for his mother and sister, mingling with his reflections, and the Emperor, amidst his splendor, might have envied his proscribed prisoner his calm and peaceful anticipations.

Our tale must now return to the deathbed of the aged Christian. Sudden indeed, as well as most painful, was this event to his affectionate friends; they had left him but an hour before, by his own request, as he expressed a fear that their unremitting attention to him would injure them, little thinking his dissolution was so near, and, as the conviction pressed upon them that the one who had supplied the place of the kindest parent, who had shared his own, even too small pittance with them, was no more, that they could no longer hear his endearing expressions, no longer see his mild eye beaming upon them, with parental love, can it be wondered that every other consideration was lost, for the time, in the sad reflection. As they bent over the couch in unutterable grief, their own sorrow was increased by that of the aged domes-

tics, who had grown old in the service of the kind and beloved master, who now lay before them, in all the stillness of death. In those moments of deep and suffocating grief they almost lost sight of the consoling and joyful belief that their beloved parent was then rejoicing in a heaven of pure and unalloyed felicity, but, as they mingled their tears, the silence of heartfelt sorrow was interrupted by a sweet and solemn voice, repeating, "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord," and Sister Helena, as she was called, a pious Christian recluse, approached and knelt with them, by the remains of the good old man. Sweet and soothing to their souls were the prayers and thanksgiving which she poured forth with fervent earnestness, and they arose from their knees, chastened and resigned. Cold and insensible must have been the feelings of those who could have listened to those aspirations unmoved, or gazed upon the inspired countenance of this extraordinary female, without almost fancying that she was indeed an angel of consolation, permitted to sojourn awhile upon earth to soothe the sorrows of the afflicted, and direct their hopes to that bright and happy home which she had quitted upon her errand of love. The brightness of her dark and expressive eyes was contrasted with the marble whiteness of her complexion, her beautiful hair, which had formerly graced the most precious pearls, and adorned costly diamonds, the gifts of royal love, was now confined by a simple braid, and the form, once decked in imperial purple, and glittering in courtly magnificence, was now wrapped in the plainest garb, the simplicity of which could not hid the loveliness of her form. In a voice of soothing sympathy, she gave some directions to the sorrowing servants, and then kindly led the bereaved relations from the chamber of death. "He has departed in peace," said she, as they entered a retired chamber, "may our last end be like this; may we die the death of this righteous man, and now, dearest friends, the swiftly passing moments warn me to be quick in what I have to relate. Your minds, I know, are stayed upon the Rock of Ages, and though I speak of danger and death, ye will know that the Lord of all the earth will do right. Brother Ambrose, last night, brought the tidings that tomorrow is appointed for another of those awful scenes with which Rome is now familiar, and, though we know that the moment when the soul of the Christian takes its flight from this world of sorrow and wickedness is a moment which introduces it to an eternity of happiness, unalloyed and unspeakable, yet we turn with shuddering grief, from its accompaniments of pain and torture." "Oh, tell me not," said Cleone, with startling agony of voice and manner, "say not that our Curtius is condemned," and overcome with grief and terror, she sank upon the ground, while

the mother, with her hands clasped, and her eyes raised, prayed for strength from above. "He is indeed condemned," said Sister Helena, "but listen, dear sisters, and see if there is not a ray of hope to lighten this gloomy hour. After learning these tidings, I left our retreat immediately to comfort you, if possible, and, with hasty steps proceeded along the private path which leads from our secluded dwelling directly by the remains of the ancient temple upon the hill. While groping my way through the ivy and thick bushes, I was startled by the sound of voices, proceeding from the ruins, and the name of the Emperor repeated with the most awful threats, and joined to the fear of discovery induced me to stop and conceal myself. That the speakers were bitter enemies to Nero was evident from their conversation, and, in a short time I gathered from it that they had entered into a conspiracy, and bound themselves by solemn oaths to take his life, and, that the moment of his leaving the amphitheatre, after the executions, was chosen to effect their purpose, as being a moment of confusion and dismay. The infamous Caius Piso, whose inveterate hate for the Emperor is so well known, I discovered, was at the head of the conspiracy, and their measures are so well concerted that they must succeed. Now, dear friends, may we not, by warning Nero of this imminent, this certain danger, save the life of your beloved Curtius? Listen, Cleone, have you courage to face this cruel Emperor, and intercede for the life of your brother? And, if he refuses to grant it to your prayers, yet you may induce him to mercy by convincing him that the means of saving his own life is in your power." "But, do you reflect, Helena, that this inhuman tyrant may, and most probably would turn a deaf ear to all her intercessions, and force her, by torture, to confess her knowledge of this conspiracy? No, it is for me to offer myself a sacrifice for my son. I will endure every torment he can inflict, and, perhaps, when convinced that he cannot extort the secret, he will grant me the life of my child." "Mother," said Cleone, throwing her arms around her neck, "mother, do you doubt my resolution, my courage, my ability to endure any suffering for the sake of those so dear to me? Oh, let me go; I will throw myself at his feet; he cannot resist my supplications; he will be grateful to us for saving him from sure destruction, and reward us by restoring my brother to his home and friends." "Hear me," said Sister Helena, "I myself would be the intercessor, were I not certain that Nero would recognize in me one who has incurred his mostly deadly hatred, one whom he would not hesitate to sacrifice to his revengeful passions, and whose entreaties for the life of the young Christian would only be a passport for his speedy death. You, madam," said she, addressing the distressed and al-

most fainting mother, "are known as a Christian. You have already been exposed to the suspicions of Nero, and have but barely escaped his cruel persecutions by a life of the strictest seclusion. Your daughter, reared in retirement, and unknown to the world, would not be so obnoxious, and she might not be unprotected. The young Flavius, the unswerving friend of Curtius, who has already braved the indignation of the tyrant, for his sake, would, without doubt, accompany and support her, and high in rank, and beloved by all parties, his influence would go far to ensure her safety. But, we have but moments to deliberate; midnight is the time appointed for these conspirators to meet and perfect their plan, and, if we resort to these, I am convinced, only means, to save the life of this dear friend, Nero must know all in season to apprehend them together." "Do not hesitate, mother, dearest, dearest mother, let me save my brother from this awful death; I shall be safe; God will protect me; He will aid me to confront this terrible Nero." "My Cleone, my darling child, must I expose you to this danger? Must I thrust you, as it were, into the jaws of this inhuman monster? Oh, think, dear sister, of his aggravated cruelties; remember the fate of his own mother and wife; when has any consideration stayed his barbarity? How can we expect, how can we even hope that he will lose his grasp of a victim, so completely in his power? He will sacrifice them both, and I—I shall be left childless and alone!" Tears of commiseration streamed from the eyes of the sympathizing recluse. "Be it as you please," said she, "I cannot, dare not urge you to a measure which may indeed end as you fear; although I think it would be otherwise. I know the disposition of Nero. Alas!" said she, with shuddering grief, "who should know it so well! Amidst all his fierce cruelty, he is a very coward by nature, and nothing so perfectly unmans him as the fear of death." "Go then, my Cleone," said her mother, "if possible, save your brother from this dreadful doom, and if I am bereaved of both, I will pray that I, to, may join you in that heaven, where there is no separation."

The evening was now advanced, and Herbert closed the volume. "How was it possible," said Susan, "that Valeria, for it was she, I suppose, who bore the name of Sister Helena, could have eluded the search of the vindicative Emperor? With his exasperated feelings, he would leave no means untried to discover her, and these being joined with his great power, I cannot imagine how she could have been saved." "Though the early Christians," said Herbert, "when called to give a reason for the hope that was in them, were bold in conscious innocence, though they shrank not from danger or death in the service of their Mas-

ter, still, they did not, needlessly, cast away their lives; but, even with the prudence of worldly wisdom, avoided exposure. Their residence was often in the most obscure places, in the depths of gloomy forests, or in caves of the earth, from whence, in the still hours of night, the sounds of praise and thanksgiving arose to Him to whom 'the darkness is as at noonday.' Many of these subterranean abodes are still shown, and the inscriptions upon the rugged walls prove them to have been the homes of the persecuted Christians." "I should like to go to Rome," said Charles, "and go into those caves, and see the ruins of that great city." "And those ancient pavements," said Mary, "which have been swept by the imperial purple, and visit the tombs, where rest the remains of those great and good, of whom we read." "Now Mary is upon her hobby," said Susan, "and she will not stop short of the Holy Land at least. If she were only an old man, with a big wig, she would be a most inveterate antiquary." "I will sympathize with you, dear Mary, said Elizabeth, "if to read of former ages, and their stirring events, excites so much interest, how delightful to stand upon the spots commemorated in history, but, above all, to tread in the footsteps of the Saviour, and visit the scenes hallowed by his presence." "To stand upon the Mount of the Olive trees," said Herbert, "to wander by the brook Cedron, and through the ancient burial places of the Jews. To linger by the shores of the sea of Galilee, and mark the swelling waters, to fix in our 'mind's eye' the very place where Jesus walked upon the boisterous waves. Come evening, remind me, Mary, and I will read some lines which may interest you, as being an admirer of poetry as well as of these remembrances of bygone days."

Chapter VI

The mild blue sky, the silvery moon, sailing in its unclouded
brightness,
And the soft breeze of night, wafted upon the gentle summer air,
All breathe of peace and loveliness; man's base passions alone mar
the scene.

Although Mrs. Wilson lived in comparative retirement, yet her house was the abode of hospitality. Many valuable friends of her younger years, and of her husband, still kept up that friendly intercourse which had always been a source of pleasure and improvement; and among them were many, not only the most pious, but the most enlightened and amiable characters of the day. In their society the young people became accustomed to that true politeness, that delicate wit and refined conversation which is the sure index of good breeding and high intellect. While surrounded by visitors of this class they could not so much regret the loss of their evening entertainments, and, when left with only their own domestic circle, they returned to them with renewed enjoyment. Some evenings had elapsed during one of those pleasant seasons of visiting, and the continuation of the Tale, which had so interested them, had been necessarily delayed, but at length the time arrived when they were again alone and at liberty to pursue their course of reading.

"The moonbeams shone in rich splendor upon the massy walls and towers of the imperial palace and illumed the glittering arms of the guard who surrounded it. Preparations for a feast were going on and strains of soft music were heard within. Its magnificent apartments were blazing with light and sparkling with gold and silver ornaments and the fragrance of the scented draperies diffused itself through their vast extent. In an inner chamber, more gorgeously decorated, and hung with cloth of gold, the bordering of which was heavy with jewels, reclined upon a luxurious couch the infamous Nero, the lord of all this splendor, but despised and contemned by even the meanest of his subjects. His purple robe hung in rich folds over the silver drapery of his couch, his long, perfumed hair was parted over his white forehead, displaying an effeminate countenance which, to a casual observer, would show none of those traits of revengeful malice or diabolical cruelty which were the characteristics of the despotic

Emperor. His jeweled fingers pressed lightly the strings of a lute and the careless indolence of his attitude expressed total indifference to everything excepting his own ease. A few attendants stood at the door and his favorite freedman waited near the couch to receive the first indications of his pleasure. "Anicetus," said he, at length, raising his heavy eyes, in the expression of which alone might be seen the evil passions of his nature, "did you instruct my guards to admit the woman whom we encountered at the bath?" "I did, mighty Emperor," was the answer. "Repeat to me the words of her address." "My lord, to the best of my recollection, these were her very words: 'The star of thy nativity wanes; wouldst thou know more? admit me ere thy revel begins.'" The complexion of Nero grew paler as he said in a low tone: "Dost thou believe in the prophetic gifts of these Sybils?" "The star of Nero will always be in the ascendant," said the freedman. "Is not his word the law of Rome? and not of Rome only, but of the whole world?" and he bowed to the ground in cringing servility. "Nevertheless, I would hear what this woman would reveal; see that she is admitted at the time. Some wine, Anicetus. What insufferable insolence in Servius Galba to interfere in the execution of my will! His haughty ambition requires pruning. *Reprieve!* pardon the arrogant Christian, who has dared to brave my power! No! by Jupiter, the extremest tortures shall punish his audacity; we will see if his demeanor will retain its insulting composure. Are all my orders executed? Is everything in readiness?" "Everything, my noble lord; all has been prepared according to your directions, and your decree to that effect has been given to the impudent Christian, who will have the night to contemplate the certainty of his deserved fate." "It is 'well," said Nero, and a malignant smile passed across his features and, while carelessly tuning his instrument, his thoughts were apparently rioting in the prospect of the gratification of his revenge. At this moment the woman, who, by his order was suffered to enter, appeared at the door of the apartment. As the freedman met her with an impatient gesture, she waved him aside and, with a firm step and commanding air, advanced to the couch, from which Nero had started. The same dark and piercing eyes were fixed upon him which had terrified Cleone and the same deep and hollow voice sounded in his ear." The decree of Fate is even now passing; the fiat of justice is being issued; thou, who hast arrogated to thyself the powers of life and death at the dictates of thine own base passions, tremble before a Power in whose sight thou art but as a grain of dust, more degraded than the meanest worm of the ground thou hast polluted. The Sun of the universe will arise, but not

for thee; the breeze of the mountains will refresh all nature, but its healthful influence will impart no life to thine inanimate form; Emperor of Rome! the sands of your life are few and fast ebbing!" Nero had stood motionless and as she stayed her denunciations he sank again upon his couch, but a moment elapsed, when rage and anger glowed in his countenance, before pale as marble. "Wretch!" said he, "thy fate is sealed, tortures and death await thee." Unshrinkingly she stood before the tyrant, unawed she witnessed his deadly rage. "Yet retrace thy steps," she said, "man of many crimes, while yet in thy power repair those evils which have not passed beyond thy influence. From the deep abyss of thy guilt and infamy look up; for, far through the fearful gloom the rays of the sweet star of mercy *may* reach even thee. For me, I am beyond your power; you can neither save nor destroy me. Nero, to purchase the slender chance for mercy which is yet yours I would barter life and yield it amidst all the torments the art of man could inflict. But my time has elapsed; we meet no more on earth." So saying, before the dismayed Emperor could collect his scattered thoughts, she passed from the apartment and from the astonished gaze of the attendants who, though distant spectators of the scene, had not heard what had passed. "Draw near, Anicetus," said Nero, as his freedman approached. "Where did Galba direct his steps when he left our presence? I liked not his haughty bearing." To the Senate chamber, my lord." "Ha! are the Senate together tonight? for what purpose?" "I know not, most mighty Emperor; the doors of the chamber are closed." "The slaves! do they dare?" He strode the apartment with hasty steps, his cheeks blanched with passion. "Discover," said he, "the cause of this secret sitting; by my head, they shall dearly rue this audacity. Bring me the report without delay." The freedman bent his body in obedience and withdrew. Left alone, the restless motions and perturbed demeanor of the Emperor expressed the agitation of his mind. At times he would gnash his teeth in anger, then strong lines of terror and dismay would cross his features. At length, throwing himself upon the couch, he covered his face with his hands and appeared lost in thought. The lowliest goatherd among the Appenines, who, lying down at night with but the hard ground for a pillow and a canopy of boughs for a shelter, knows not where to find his daily food, was happier than this lord of Italy. Of what avail was all this pomp to him, whose splendid robes covered a heart beating with terror and alarm? The abode of suspicion and fear, torn with the pangs of dark remorse, but still raging with the most horrid passions, to gratify which the country which he was bound to serve and protect was

made to bleed at every pore? The meanest serf, the most degraded slave throughout this vast empire would have refused to exchange situations with this lordly tyrant could they have realized the horrors of his guilty conscience. At one moment he would devise means to crush the Senate at a single blow; then the words of the Sybil, recurring to his mind, the idea of conciliation would be uppermost, and, though his whole frame trembled with impotent rage, yet he would determine to practise his powers of dissimulation and defer the gratification of his revenge to a more fitting opportunity. The superstitious terrors of his intellect were all aroused, his cowardly heart quailed at the shadow of coming events which he knew would overwhelm him, and his revengeful passions were all in wild commotion.

A slave, bending before him, announced Lucius Flavius, and, collecting his thought, and endeavoring to smooth his brow to composure, he ordered that the patrician should be admitted.

Herbert was here interrupted by the call of some persons upon business which might detain him some time, to the great annoyance of the little party. A pleasant conversation, however, commenced upon the influence of superstition over mankind throughout all ages of the world. "Even in our enlightened age," said Mrs. Wilson, "we find many who are slaves to superstition in some of its various forms, but its influence is milder and gradually decreasing. Within a century and a half persons whose minds were enlightened, of undoubted piety, and who would have smiled in derision at the superstitious observances of the ancient Romans, professed full faith in witchcraft, that most terrific of all delusions." "Oh," said Mary, "I never hear the relation of those times without a shudder. What could have been the cause of such frightful credulity?" "It is shrouded in mystery," said Mrs. Wilson, "and, probably, in this world we shall never know. Let us be thankful that no vestiges of such infatuation are left, but the sad spot where so many victims to its maddening influence perished." "Even here," said Elizabeth, "we are not exempted from this universal passion; we, too, have had our renowned fortune teller." "Oh, yes," said Susan, "I overheard Phoebe, the other day, gravely recounting the wonderful predictions of this redoubtable Sybil." "Was Moll Pitcher a Sybil?" said Charles. "She would have passed for one in ancient times, Charles," said his mother, "and, with her shrewd countenance and small, black eyes, aided by her red cloak and hood, might, I think, have played her part quite respectably. Her dwelling, too, would be appropriate for such a character; desolate and dreary, at the foot of the high rock, and embellished with

a tall memento of one of the monsters of the ocean, the rib of a whale. I will read some lines upon her name and character by some witty poet of the day:

MOLL PITCHER

"Ah! dost thou laugh at the familiar name?
Deride and ridicule her world-wide fame?
Dost jest at sorcery and witchcraft's power,
At whose dread magic even wise men cower?
Laugh, if you will; the time has long gone by
When Moll would change your laugh into a cry.
Know, daring sceptic, that in days of yore
No thoughtless wight ventured to brave her power.
Should even the smile incredulous appear,
Woe to its author, luckless his career!
Oh, the sharp pains which seemed to vex his bones,
How grievous 'twas to hear his piteous moans!
At midnight hour, when bites and itching smart
Assailed his flesh and saddened his poor heart,
Even his household gods seemed leagued to slay
His bosom's peace and drive his joys away;
On his own threshold his unwary feet
Would stumbling slip and sad disaster meet;
His faithful dog would snarl at his caress,
And wholesome food with racking pains distress.
Oh, witch implacable! how oft thy form
At distance seen caused the scared youth to run.
How oft the thrifty housewife banned thy name
While toiling o'er the slowly turning cream!
How oft thy old red cloak, streaming afar,
Foreboded evil and excited fear!
Fear to the maiden, lest the raging sea
Had whelmed in death her much-loved sailor boy;
Fear to the bashful swain, let the wished beam
Of Katie's smile should prove an empty dream;
Dread to the merchant, lest the wild, weird glance
Should tell of loss, of shipwreck and mischance;
And even the parson grave forebore to frown
As her dark eye flashed o'er his passing form.
For why? His memory this precaution lends
'Of the unrighteous Mammon to make friends.'
Yet oft the village gossip told a deed
Of kindly pity to the poor man's need;
How Moll would stand beside the bed of death

And bathe the pallid brow and catch the breath,
The dying breath, and soothe the last sad moan,
Breathed for the dear ones he should leave alone.
That many a smile relieved the falling tear,
As 'midst a childish group Moll would appear,
While her capacious pocket would bring forth
Rich stores of apples red to raise their mirth.
Long years have rolled away, yet Molly's fame
Still lingers round the spot that bears her name.
'Moll Pitcher's house,' a lonely spot, full sure,
Though some there were who sought her close-shut door,
Some restless ones, who longed to know their fate,
Unwilling the decrees of Heaven to wait;
As the still evening closed, with awe-struck glance,
Their lingering feet would stealthily advance,
With timid knock they waked the echoes lone,
Then started back, half tempted to return.
But 'tis not ours to tell the mystic rites
Attendant on those dark and fearful nights,
Though oft I've heard my aged grandame say
That better far 'twould be to stay away.
Now, o'er the mound, where rests her mortal form,
The wild grass waves with low and gentle moan;
There sleeps the dust, so restless once, and there
'Twill rest, no longer to excite a fear.
There let the memory of her follies lie;
The memory of true worth will never die."

"Did you ever see a witch, mother?" said Charles. "If you will listen, my son, I will tell you a story, the only one relating to a witch, which ever came to my certain knowledge.

"When I was a tiny school girl there stood a lonely little house at the foot of a rising ground on the direct road to our school house; there were no trees about it, but a few choke berries and alder bushes, for there was a marshy piece of ground there. A very small lot was cultivated as a garden by the hands of its only inhabitant, poor old 'Aunt Lois,' as everybody called her. Nobody knew any harm of Aunt Lois, but every body said 'Certainly she was a witch.' The time had passed when witches were hanged or burned, so Aunt Lois lived peaceably in her own home, but many wonderful stories were told about her, such as that she was seen churning butter in the night, and, though nothing could be nicer or sweeter than her butter, yet some wise people asserted 'that she must have help about it which nobody knew of.' Old Joe Hart said that he had seen a company of witches, riding on

broomsticks through the air, with Aunt Lois at their head with a cap and long cloak on, and a wand in her hand. This, he said was "just as true as anything he ever said in all his life," but as Joe was noted for telling great stories, people would have been glad of better authority. But no part of the community was more troubled about these stories than the children belonging to the school, and, though the boys blustered a good deal and said 'Who's afraid?' yet it was observed that they always kept the side of the lane farthest from Aunt Lois's house; and, as to the girls, they would scramble over the fence and run through a swamp rather than go near it. An event, however, occurred which not only quieted their fears, but even made Lois popular in their opinion. It was a warm afternoon in the summer, when a little troop of boys and girls were returning from school, when they espied among the wet ground at the foot of the hill, near the old woman's house, a cluster of beautiful lilies. Never were any wild flowers so much sought for as those lilies, for they were very scarce and of rare and beautiful colors. 'I know I can get some,' said Catherine, and, followed closely by two others, she bounded over the low wall and, without taking thought of the swamp, she sprang forward to be the first to gain the wished-for prize. But soon the ground began to give way beneath her feet, but she had almost gained the flowers, and, supposing that by one more leap she should gain sure footing, she jumped forward, but down she sank, deep, deep in the mire, and there she was planted, unable to stir her feet, and imagining her little body was going, too, she did not know where. She was near enough to clasp the tall stems of the lilies and clung to them as if for support, but the slender roots gave way and, though she had gained the desired objects, yet she would joyfully have given them up to her frightened companions, who had stopped just before they arrived at the fatal spot, could she have been safe with them. 'Do help me, Martha; do take my hand, Susie,' screamed the little girl, but when they dare not come further and were turning back, she began to sob and cry most piteously. But, just then, terrible to behold, Aunt Lois's door opened and, to our great dismay, she appeared. What a scampering now ensued! The boys jumped over the wall and the girls ran, without looking back, until they had gained what they considered a safe distance from the dreaded spot, but the little girl was left, unable to stir. She covered her face with her hands to shut out the sight of the old witch, but she heard her step and the terror of she knew not what almost took away her senses. 'For mercy's sake, my little dear,' said Aunt Lois, 'why did you come into this wet, boggy place? I don't know as I can get to you, but put out your hand.

If I should get stuck here, too, we should be in a pickle.' Catherine obeyed, for the voice of Aunt Lois sounded kind and pleasant, and, with a strong pull, she extricated the little girl, but a sad sight was displayed. Her feet were black with the mud of the swamp, but, her shoes being tied on, she did not lose them. And now, to the great terror of the children, who were watching from their hiding places, Lois carried the little girl into her house, and solemn was the consultation as we gathered together and debated upon her fate. Such long and dismal faces are seldom seen, such terrible stories were told as made the eyes of the younger children dilate with dismay. But at this moment the little Catherine was seen running toward us. 'Aunt Lois isn't a witch,' said she, 'see, she has washed my shoes and the bottom of my dress, and she has given me some doughnuts and some apples, and picked me a whole bunch of lilies.' The charm was at an end. Aunt Lois's cake and apples were eaten with great relish and, ever after, in the opinion of the children, Aunt Lois was 'a grand, good old woman.' "

"I wish all witch stories would end as well as this," said Susan. "And that all witches were as good as Aunt Lois," said Charles.

Chapter VII

Judea's daughters mourn her blighted soil,
Her dark-eyed sons in foreign regions toil,
But Holy is the land where Jesus trod
Sacred its soil, though desolate and sad.

A bright, clear, cold Sabbath morning dawned. The smooth snow sparkled as if sprinkled with diamonds, and the bracing atmosphere seemed to infuse new life into creation. The strict habits of our Puritan fathers, in regard to public worship, were not forgotten in the family of Mrs. Wilson, and, when, all meeting at their social evening conversation, many remarks were made upon the exercises of the day, no carping criticisms, no sarcastic observations were indulged in, or would have been permitted. Ministers, in those days, were both loved and reverenced; loved for themselves, and reverenced for their holy vocation, and, generally grew old among a people to whom they were attached by the strongest ties, whose interests were theirs, and whose children were considered their own. There is no more beautiful description of a country clergyman, and none that more generally applies to the times of which I am writing, than Goldsmith's. The pastors, in those days, literally "allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

After a day spent in listening to the words of one of those emphatically good men, the evening fire was surrounded by our little company, who were comparing notes upon the services of the day. The subject was Christ choosing his disciples, and, one of the remarks of one of the speakers was, that because the first followers of Christ were probably illiterate men, it should not be infered that learning was not necessary for ministers of the present day. Almighty power could inspire them with wisdom, without human means, and, that was then the case, but the miraculous interposition of Providence was not now granted, therefore, education was a most useful auxiliary to piety. An interesting conversation upon the subject then ensued. At length Mary reminded Herbert of his promise to read them some poetry, and he read as follows:

"The setting sun shone bright and clear on Galilee's dark sea,
Lovely was its reflection of the clear and cloudless sky.
The fisher's boats were scattered o'er the broad and deep expanse

And the mingled sounds of busy life re-echoed from its banks,
Here Naz'reth's populous city stretched its crowded noisy street,
And there Capernaum's lofty towers the passing traveler greet;
Here the wild fig tree bends beneath its luscious watery load,
And there the light green olive spreads around the mountain side.
Oh! chosen land; how lovely then thy hills and valleys seemed,
That 'midst such beauty dwelt such sin, ah! who would then have deemed,
Upon those waves, one humble bark was making for the land,
Weary and faint, its inmates joyed as they approached the strand.
A life of toil and scanty fare, these humble fishers led,
And, wearily and patiently they earned their daily bread;
The careless glance would scarce remark aught in their aspect rude
Save the dull look of untaught men, in discontented mood,
But observations practiced eye, would trace the lines of thought,
Of the sedate intelligence of minds with wisdom fraught;
Would mark the quick and varying glance of passion, strong and deep,
Though, now, within the calm, cold breast, the stormy feelings sleep;
Would note the traces of that zeal, which oft in after days
Glowed in those hearts, and warmed the world by its reflected blaze,
Which led those men, so humble now, with firm and dauntless mien,
Tortures to brave, and even death, with hearts firm and serene;
But why their looks of earnest awe, now bent towards the shore?
Why are those features roused to life, so still and calm before?
Mark you, on yonder point that form? is it of earth or heaven?
Though lowly are his robes, such grace is not to mortals given,
Thy coast, O favored Galilee! Such foot ne'er pressed before;
Such voice, O lovely lake! ne'er waked the echoes of thy shore,
Mark but that pure and holy brow, where heaven's own perfect peace
Sits calm enthroned, and bids the world's tumultuous passions cease.
That eye, whose quick and piercing glance, whose full and brilliant light
Searches each heart, and reads each thought of those who meet its sight,
Then listen to that sacred voice, that simple 'Follow me.'
Aye, blessed Jesus, aye; through life, to death, we follow thee;
Such is the quick, the glad response, their earnest gesture shows,
See, in their looks the free assent, e'er from their lips it flows,

Peter! thy dark and flashing eye, thy lips compressed and stern,
Says 'though all men forsake thee, Lord, yet is my purpose firm';
And it was firm, though the dark tempter sought, by many a wile,
To lure him from his plighted faith, and lead his heart to guile;
Yes; it was firm, for with his blood he made the compact sure,
And, on the Rock of Peter's faith, the church will rest secure.
The waters of that hallowed lake still wash that honored shore
Still o'er its waves the setting sun does his bright radiance pour,
But on its dark blue surface glides no solitary bark,
And o'er that once fair land, a cloud hangs heavily and dark.
Heaven has received again to bless that pure and blessed One,
His chosen martyred followers, too, victory o'er Death have won,
But memory hangs, with cherished love, round scenes his presence blest,
And dwells with fond affection on the soil his footsteps pressed."

"I like very much to hear Herbert read poetry," said Charles. "Mother, may he read those lines called 'Early Recollections?' They refer to scenes in our own town, Susan, and I know you will like them." "Why should Susan like them more than the rest of us, Charles?" said Mary. "Oh, I think they are more suited to her taste." "I must certainly hear them," said Susan, "if it were only to know whether Charles has judged rightly of my taste." "I will endeavor to find them tomorrow," said Mrs. Wilson, "and I hope they will serve to amuse you." At the first convenient opportunity Herbert continued the tale of the early Christians.

The delicious coolness of the evening breeze, after a day of uncommon heat was, of itself, a temptation sufficient to draw many into the open air, and the streets of Rome were thronged with her citizens. Here might be seen the rich carriage, borne by slaves in livery, on whose soft and luxurious cushions reclined the haughty noble; there, the patrician, with his train of attendants, and the wealthy plebean, conscious of his inferior rank, but emulating the proud bearing of his rival. Chairs and litters passed in quick succession, and freed men and slaves jostled each other. From the stately palaces resounded the notes of revelry and mirth, and from the theatres, the sounds of music and dancing. In the opening, before one of the courts, were gathered a crowd of listeners, around one of those gifted poets, who, without forethought, composed and recited upon any given subject, with ease and gracefulness, and are rewarded not only by gratuities of money, but by the rapturous applause of their hearers. Through one of the streets passed a funeral procession, for, in

Rome, all their funeral ceremonies were performed by torchlight and much pomp and parade was displayed upon the occasion in honor of the deceased. Thus life, with its shifting scenes, its hopes and fears and conflicting passions, were, at this time, in full contrast with the startling reality of death; though few heeded the solemn warning. A hasty glance, some words of condolence or commendation of the deceased, and the proud pageant was forgotten. Amidst all this bustling confusion might be seen some, apparently persons of distinction, whose air of mystery and whispering conferences portended some event of importance. Two citizens met near the Temple of Fortune; "Health and happiness, noble Varro," said a rich patrician to a stately noble, "may the deities be propitious; have you heard the rumor?" "I have been witnessing the betrothal of my son to the daughter of Publius Dentatus, and have heard no rumor. Of what nature?" "A most happy betrothal; may their years be auspicious! The reports are of a most astounding character. It is rumored that the Senate, in full council, have condemned Nero, and, that Servius Galba, so lately returned from Spain, will be chosen, by the soldiery, as his successor." "And, would Galba be the choice of the Senate, Licinius?" "Perhaps not, but he is the favorite of the legions from Spain, and beloved by the soldiers, generally, and they could find no fault with the choice, unless it be the severity of his manners." "He is a good and honorable man," said the elder, "but he will find the rank and title of Emperor but a thin gilding to the bitter pill of royalty he must swallow. But, the world will last our day, Licinius, let the wheel go round." And they parted. At the turning of one of the streets, a knot of citizens were conferring. "How is this, Sempronius?" said one, "what will be the consequence of this decree of condemnation, of which we hear so many rumors? Will the Emperor abdicate, or have his enemies determined upon his death?" "Vengeance will not always sleep, fellow citizens," said the one who was addressed; "Who is not an enemy to the detestable vices of Nero? and what wickedness is there in the whole catalogue of crime which he has not committeed?" "Nay, Sempronius," said a man with a stern and forbidding countenance, "he has done good service to the State, by exterminating those Christians." "By our household deities," said another, "I know not that, for the sect is like the Hydra of old, as fast as one is exterminated, as you say, a score appear in his place. I am for stopping these executions at once, and then we shall see if this heresy will not die of itself." "But, said the first speaker, "will not Nero set the Senate at defiance? He has his favorites, and may yet make a stand." "Not so," said Sempronius, "his nature is cowardly, and at the first intimation

of danger, he would shrink from it with terror. He needs no accuser but his own guilty conscience; he has waded in the blood of innocence, and will yet be deluged in its avenging waves." The company dispersed, each in his several path.

With a hurried step, the freedman of Nero was seen ascending the steps of the palace; he was greeted by one of his fellow servants, "Whither so fast, Anicetus? One would think the avenger was at thy heels." "He is," said the freedman. "There is something wrong in the wind," said the questioner, "there is some cause for so much stir and commotion in the city," continued he, addressing one of the guards, "and the military, without the walls are in motion, for the trumpets have sounded." "Well," said the other, "let what will come, my duty lies here."

We will now return to the entrance of Lucius Flavius into the apartment of Nero, in the imperial palace. With a firm and lofty step, but a respectful demeanor, the young and noble defender of innocence, advanced, supporting the sister of Curtius, who, though her complexion was pale, and her form tremulous with emotion, shrank not from the haughty and insolent regard of the tyrant. "How is this, my Lord Lucius; what fair votary of Venus have you introduced to our presence with so little ceremony? Methinks some more formal introduction were befitting so much beauty." "Innocence, my Lord, the Emperor, may be always confident in its own resources, and sorrow has claims superior to all formal observances. The maiden before you is the sister of Quintius Curtius, and her errand is to solicit, even yet, the life and freedom of her brother." Cleone slid from the arm of her protector, and bent her knee before Nero. "We are orphans," said she, "my brother and myself, children of one of Rome's noblest citizens. Our father fought his country's battles, defended her liberty and gloried in her prosperity. Our ancestors gave their lives and treasures for her benefit, and my brother would yield his heart's blood for the welfare of his native land; we are alone in the world; noble Emperor, grant me the life of my brother." The sweet pleading tones of her voice, the earnest expressions of her eyes, would, it would seem, have produced some feeling, even in the hard heart of Nero; such was not the case. With a malignant sneer, he said: "And so permit him to convert you, fair damsel, to the faith of the Nazarene? By the beard of Silenus, that would be sacrilege to bind so alluring an object in the galling chains of that cynical sect. Not so, my beautiful grace; love for our country influences us to cleanse it of these fanatical reformers, who are attempting to subvert its established principles, and overturn our faith in a religion which has stood the test of ages. He must suffer for his obstinacy; but, for

you, fair maiden, you shall be under especial care and protection." With an indignant gesture, Flavius attempted to raise Cleone, but, resisting the effort, her eyes flashing, and her voice becoming more firm, "Yet a moment, haughty Emperor, your life is in my power,"— "What! ho, help here, slaves!" "Stay, Emperor," said Flavius, "there is a secret conspiracy against your life, accidentally discovered. She only can tell you the names of the conspirators, and its details. Give to her prayers the life of her brother, and your life may be preserved." "Refuse me," said Cleone, "and, so sure as you are now living, so certain is your destruction." A scowl of rage distorted the countenance of Nero. "There are ways, my haughty young dame, to compel such refractory tempers to confession." "Before your cruel purpose could be executed," said Cleone, "the time would have elapsed when your life might be saved. Death is fearful to all, were it only for the uncertainty of the prospect beyond. Is your conscience so pure that you dare look upon its near approach without alarm? Will you not shrink from encountering its gloom, to you the dark mystery of the future?" She was interrupted by the hasty entrance of the freedman, who, bending low before the Emperor, addressed to him some communication, which, first suffusing his face with crimson, soon left it of a deadly paleness. Fear and irresolution marked his features. He gave some hasty orders, and appeared lost in thought for a short time. At length, seeming to have formed a determination, he turned to Flavius. "Young lord," said he, "time does not admit of delay; let this maiden give me, in a few words, the outline of this conspiracy, and then, upon one condition, I will release the Christian." "Give us an order to that effect, my lord Emperor, and you shall know all," and, while Cleone trembled between hope and fear, Nero wrote upon a leaf of his tablets, "Release the Christian prisoner, Quintius Curtius," and tearing it from the book, affixed his seal, and gave the order to Flavius. Hurry and dismay marked his motions, and, turning to Cleone, he commanded her to make the disclosure. In a clear, distinct manner, she related the circumstances, and mentioned Caius Piso as the principal conspirator. He muttered between his teeth, "Let me but escape this first danger, and I will defy Piso and his retainers." "Go," said he, aloud, "leave the presence, yet, stay, Lucius Flavius, the condition is not yet complied with." In a low constrained voice, he said, "I have just received intelligence of an insurrection in the army without the walls, and that the traitors have expressed their determination of deposing me, and electing Servius Galba. I know not how far the discontent extends, perhaps the Senate have dared to connive at it," and his frame trembled, and he grew more deadly pale.

"The condition I make with you is, that, if they presume to aim at my life, you will intercede. Use your influence with Galba, do you understand, do you engage to this?" "I do," said Flavius, "as I hope for mercy myself." "Enough," said Nero. Almost dreading the reality of this sudden and happy change, Cleone left the presence of this dreaded tyrant of Rome; and he was left alone with his miserable thoughts; the remembrance of the past, the horrors of his dark deeds of cruelty, mingling with dismal forebodings of future retribution. Starting in his hurried walk he listened with breathless attention to the distant sounds in the city. Again, pacing the apartment in agitation, he would mutter low and almost inaudible exclamations, "No guests arrive; that is, of it itself, suspicious; the traitors! They will all forsake me; yes, I will leave the city, without delay; but, whither? To my country house; that will do, and let the excitement subside. It was well to conciliate this Flavius by releasing the Christian; his influence may do much; that Sybil! Her prophecy weighs heavy upon me; where have I seen her dark visage before?" Then he threw himself upon his couch; but, directly springing up, "What is this?" said he, "I seem sinking into an abyss? Is there a future after death? Ho! Anicetus." As the freedman entered, he said, "Are all things prepared? Have you secured my treasures?" "All is prepared, my lord, and waiting your command." "You, at least, Anicetus, have no reason to complain of me; can I trust you?" "I will be faithful to you till the last, my master." "It is well," said Nero, "hasten our immediate departure; if I live, you shall not repent your fidelity."

Chapter VIII

I know not if it were so, but to my mind it seems
As if the grass were greener then, and brighter the sun beams.

"My dear mother," said Herbert, as Mrs. Wilson took her usual place the next evening, "we desire your opinion. Does the fact that we read this story at intervals lessen its interest?" "It would not in my opinion," said Mrs. Wilson. "I think a story, read in this manner, affords more real pleasure and instruction than the common practice, when the faculties become tired by the continued strain. It is a species of intoxication which, after the excitement is ended, leaves the mind tired and exhausted by over-exertion." "I dare say you are right, dear aunt," said Susan, "but I confess that I was disposed to quarrel with such a truth when Herbert told us he must be absent this evening, and I do not like to have Charles disappointed." "Charles must learn to bear disappointments," said his mother, smiling at his earnest and sober look. "I have found the lines you wished to have read, my son, and we will spend the evening in reading them." "But," said Charles, "I wish the good young Christian was released from his dreary dungeon." "Never mind, dear Charles," said Herbert, "the anticipation of happiness is very pleasant, you know." "Yes," said Elizabeth, "but you remember we have the very best authority for saying that 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick.'" "There seems to be no alternative," said Mrs. Wilson, "and we will endeavor to evade this heart-sickness by diverting your attention to other objects, even the pleasant scenes of our own home."

So soon as they were all in readiness, Elizabeth read the following

REMINISCENCES OF LYNN

The remembrance of our youth
Is as a summer day, and brighter gleams
As the dark shadow of our life grows deep,
There is no home so dear to us as that
Which reared our childhood, and its pleasant scenes
Rise, dear to memory'e eye. Those old trees
Under whose shade our merry sports went on
Are dear as ancient friends. My early home!

While memory lives, thy peaceful, happy scenes
Will never be forgot. From that green lane
Extends a pathway, bordered with wild shrubs,
Ascending to the summit of a Rock,
That Rock of fame, surnamed the "Lover's Leap."
Not this, the Rock of old, whence Sappho sprang,
And, plunging in the cold and pitiless flood,
Ended, at once, her love, and her sad life;
For no deep water, flowing at the base
Of this steep Rock, offers so quick a cure
For hopeless love, nor do I know, in truth,
That hapless lover ever tried this leap;
But, so much have I heard, that an old cow,
Moved by some cause which never can be known,
Approached too near the brink, perhaps to graze
Upon the scanty grass, or the wild box
Which grew among its fissures, and, sad fate!
By a misstep, losing her balance, fell,
And lost her precious life; precious, no doubt
To some good, thrifty farmer's wife, whose store
Of wholesome milk was thus diminished quite.
But nought have I to do with these sad tales
Of death; I love to think of those bright, happy days,
When, with a gay and happy troop of friends,
All happy, we patrolled the pleasant path
And rested on that Rock, and sang sweet songs
And laughed and talked, and wove gay wreaths of flowers.
How pleasant 'twas to watch the different shades
In the green foliage of the large, thick trees
Encircling the gray Rock, and mark the view
Of the rich landscape, stretching far and wide,
While, in the distance, rolled the vast expanse
Of ocean, mingling with the dark blue sky.
There is another Rock, not like this one,
Surrounded by green shade, but smooth and bare,
And High Rock is its name; a beacon this,
Seen from afar, and, from its highest point,
A lovely prospect opens to the sight.
On the declivity a Building stood,
An object of much awe to children's eyes,
The Powder House, a magazine of wrath,
Which, when a child, I almost feared to touch,
Lest all its hidden terrors would explode;
And, lower yet, an Aqueduct, whose spring
Of clear, cold water, was a welcome treat

On a warm summer day; years bring great change,
Yet much I hope that spot is still unchanged.
One strong remembrance of that pleasant spot
Now presses on my mind, for, at its foot,
Upon the eastern side, stood a lone house,
Deserted, too, it looked, but 'twas not so;
For, though no pleasant signs of busy life
Were there, yet its patched windows showed
Some one had there sought shelter from the cold.
'Twas the far-famed Moll Pitcher's house, the scene
Of many an hour of mirth, and some of pain,
The would-be prophetess, in sullen mood,
Would sometimes vex her votaries, boding ill
Of future times. I well remember once
Standing upon that Rock, with a gay group
Of young companions, and in merry play,
Joining with them in rolling down the steep
A shower of stones toward Moll Pitcher's house;
But, as we played, the wind began to rise,
And some faint hearts among our little clan
Said the old witch had raised the wind in spite.
Our hearts beat quick with childish fear. At once
We left our sport and, running down the hill,
In the dread fear that the weird woman's rage
Would yet o'ertake us, slackened not our speed
Until the friendly shelter of a house
Received our weary little frames at last.
Let not the wise deride our infant fear.
Where is the heart that has not beat sometime
At some dark, superstitious thought of ill
Impending; or the cheek that has not blanched
At some dread mystery yet unexplained?
Where are those gay and loved companions now?
Do they yet cluster round the same bright hearth
That blessed their childhood? Do they linger still
Among those lovely scenes of early youth
So fresh in my remembrance? Ah! how few
Are left to cherish the old memories!
Some, the dear playmates of my youthful days,
Rest in that sacred spot where the tall trees
Wave a kind requiem o'er the loved remains
Of many a cherished one, and others roam
To the far western land or sunny south
Where other friends, or other loves, are theirs.
A changing world is this, and if our hearts

Are here, how frail our tenure holds.
'Twould seem, in those young, happy days
There dwelt no sin or sorrow; simple joys
Were ours; the summer morning walk,
When the fresh air was perfumed with sweet flowers,
The wild Rose and the Sweetbrier, the sweet Fern,
The Bayberry and Box; all lent their aid.
There was an ancient wall whose mossy stones
Were almost hid by the luxuriant growth
Of the wild Grape; and the green spreading leaf
Of the low blackberry, climbing o'er its top;
While, interspersed among its kindred sweets,
The rich, black thimbleberry found a place.
There have I strayed, what time the glorious sun
Rose from the ocean, and his splendid hues
Crimsoned the wide horizon, and supplied
My morning bowl of milk with a rich treat
Of juicy berries, breathing the fresh air,
Inhaling health with every passing breeze.
And even when winter, with its freezing breath,
Chilled the whole atmosphere, when the green shade
And the sweet flowers were gone, new pleasures came.
The smooth and polished ice, the hard, white snow,
Sparkling in the bright beams of the clear sun,
Afforded sport for many a winter day.
But when, at evening, the gay, cheerful fire
Called us around it by its kindly warmth,
When dear relations and loved friends were met,
Encircling its clear blaze, then was the hour
Most coveted, the hour when harmless mirth,
Improving converse and the merry glee
Of happy childhood joined in sweet accord.
How often have I listened at that hour
To the sweet song, the lively jest, and oft
To the sad tale of shipwreck, or some tale
Of other times, when our forefathers came
From distant lands, where wicked rulers sought
Their overthrow, and came to worship God
In these, then, dreary wilds, in their own way.
How the dark, stealthy Indian sought their lives;
Sickness and famine preyed upon their health,
And death removed their loved and dearest ones;
But how their God sustained them thro' their grief
And made them a great people, and that now,
When we behold their populous towns, their lands

Of rich fertility, and happy homes,
We know the Lord had led them here for good,
And prospered all their hands had sought to do.
'Tis the sweet morn of early youth that fits
Our hearts for useful life; let but our home
Be the resort of love and peace, of trust
In the wise providence of God, and years
Will not efface the deep, strong memory,
Though we may wander from the rightful way
We never shall forget the well taught way,
And conscience, like a trusty friend, will point
To the abode of peace and lead us there.
Land of our birth! our own America!
May thy fair sons, as plants of goodly growth,
Arise; and as the polished corner-stones,
Thy lovely daughters be thy pride and boast.

"You shall select poetry for me, Charles," said Susan, "since you so justly appreciate my taste. In the summer we will retrace these pleasant scenes." "I know them all," said Charles, "and many more I will show you, Susan." "There are many lovely spots around us," said Elizabeth, and the history of some of them connected with the early settlement of the town." "Do you remember, Charles, that in our ride last summer I pointed out to you a delightful situation situated upon a point of land projecting into the ocean?" "Yes, mother, and Elizabeth said it would not be so pleasant in the winter on account of its exposure to the sea. I will relate a circumstance connected with that situation, which must conclude our evening's entertainment. An English gentleman, the younger son of a noble family, determined to leave his native land and settle in America. His fortune, which was not sufficient to support him in England in that style and opulence which he thought consistent with the dignity of his family, would be ample in America for all the luxuries of life. He had married a young and lovely wife and did not find much difficulty in persuading her to follow his fortunes; but she overestimated her strength when she bade farewell to the home of her birth, the friends of her childhood. She suffered much from sickness during her voyage and, weakened both in body and mind, landed upon this, to her, a home of strangers. That sickness of the heart, which we emphatically term homesickness, seized her; she became melancholy and unhappy and even the soothing affection of her husband failed to disperse the deep gloom of her mind. With the hope that change of scene would benefit and amuse her, he made frequent excursions in the country around Salem, where

they then resided, and one of these was in the neighborhood of the situation I showed you. She immediately recognized a resemblance to the scenes of her youth, her first home. The mansion of her birth stood upon the seashore, the sound of the rushing waters was like the lullaby of her infancy, and the rugged rocks were associated in her ideas with those around her own loved home in England. Delighted that she had found a spot congenial to her feelings, her husband caused the building which you saw to be erected, and, adopting it as another home, she became tranquil and happy, lived beloved and respected and reared a family of children, some of whose descendants still reside upon the same spot." "It is not always local situation which causes this deep attachment to home," said Mary. "It is wisely ordered that it should not be so," said Mrs. Wilson." "Mother," said Charles, "may I repeat those lines upon our native land?" "Do so," said his mother.

"There is no passion in the human breast
So deep implanted as the love of home,
'Midst the rude mountains, where eternal snows
Rest on their towering height, or, hanging o'er,
Threaten each passing traveler with death.
In the secluded valleys dwell a race
Of hardy mountaineers, whose lowly huts
Are to them dearer than the whole world's wealth,
And, on Arabia's sandy desert soil,
Where no rich verdure greets the passing eye,
Where no cool, murmuring stream salutes the ear,
The wild Bedouin wanders, bold and free,
Boasting his home, the happiest and the best,
And claiming for himself Heaven's richest gift,
The gift of Freedom. The fierce Indian tribes,
Panting for war, gaining their daily food
By the precarious chase, their hardy frames
Inured to hunger; yet, with strongest ties
Cling to their native land; it is their Home.
Far in the frozen regions of the North,
The dwarfish native of those dreary plains
Turns, with disdain, from him whose kindly zeal
Would lure him from his cold and gloomy land.
While, under burning skies, in torrid climes,
The dull inhabitant, in calm content,
Dreams through his life in sluggish indolence,
Nor cares, nor wishes for a happier home."

Chapter IX

"How's this, boy? Why are the props removed from this frail plant?"
"The gardener, sir, removed them, for, he said, the plant, depending on their kindly aid, grew feeble, tho' luxuriant."
"Aye, 'tis e'en so"; and thus, with watchful care,
Our Heavenly Father takes away our props,
And, if we grow too wild, with judgment true
And constant love, he prunes till all is right.

At the first convenient opportunity Herbert resumed the tale of the early Christians.

From the scenes of confusion we have described, we will return to the Appian palace, where lay, in peaceful rest, the remains of its honored master. The domestics were busied in preparing the funeral honors for one, so reverened and beloved; some in arranging boughs of Cypress before the doors; others in adorning, with rare and beautiful flowers, the couch of the deceased, or in distributing aromatic plants about the apartment. The soft night breeze stole through the open windows, the air seeming to breath the sweet peace which surrounded the deathbed of the aged saint. The heart of one mourner in this quiet mansion, was bowed down with grief, but she was not left alone with her sorrows; the kind recluse remained with her, shared her grief, and sought to soothe her anguish. Absorbed in their anxieties, they sat in the portico, which commanded a view of the imperial palace, and, upon the steps, with her dark eyes fixed upon them, sat the female, whose predictions caused the guilty tyrant to tremble; but the wild expression of her eye was now softened, and her whole aspect changed. "He has gone to his rest," said she, and light and gentle will the sod repose upon his breast, for it was the abode of kindness, and sweet will be the requiem over his remains, for it will be the lamentation of the poor and afflicted." Then, turning to Sister Helena, to whom she did not seem a stranger, she said, "The spirit of the good and just must ascend to the heaven of your faith; but where is the final resting place of the guilty soul?" "Mother," said she, "there is time left for us, who are still inhabitants of earth, to repent and forsake our sins." "Say you so?" said the woman, and her earnest gaze and trembling limbs betrayed her emotion. "But what is lengthened time to me? Listen to the tale of one whose life has

been a long, long day of misery. Thessaly was the land of my birth; my infancy was bright as the dreams of the morning; but the destroyer came; the Romans, like the ravening wolves, poured upon our plains; my father fell, defending the home of my childhood, and my mother, with the wretched being, before you, was enslaved by the conquerors. Borne down by misery, she sank beneath the weight, and, while exposed in your market place, for sale to the highest bidder, I saw my last friend expire, and, the unfeeling crowd estimated the loss to the owner. I stood alone amid the multitude, my heart swelled in agony, but hate for the oppressor, and desire of revenge prevailed over all; I clasped my throat, that I, too, might die and disappoint, still more, our brutal enslaver, but, as I tightened my hold, and all things grew dim around me, a hand grasped my arm and a voice of compassion saluted my ear. After a few words with my master, I became the property of Marcus Curtius; he pitied my distress; he caused the remains of my mother to be interred, and, each day, her child was permitted to deck her grave with flowers. I was reared with kindness, but, to, all, save my protector and his immediate family, my heart was bitter with hatred. In the dreams of my disturbed slumbers, the home of my happiness would appear before me, its fertile fields, its rich groves of olives and figs, the vine-covered porch, the sweet songs of my country; then the scene of my father's death, my mother's dying glance, and I awoke in agony and despair; revenge in any form was the only object of my thought. This passion I nurtured, and when civil wars drenched the country in blood, when the family of my protector was dispersed, opportunities of gratifying it were daily presented. I did not embrue my hands in blood, but my heart exulted in the woes of the enslavers of my country; I did not take life, but I did not save it, when it was in my power. Years rolled on; I had no home, for I abhorred the haunts of mankind. The mountain cave was my shelter, the wild fruits of the mountain my food; but, almost unknown to myself one tie was yet unsevered. The mild glance of pity, bestowed upon me, when helpless and alone in the world, was never forgotten, and the occasional kind word, and look of sympathy had sank deep into my heart. I still cherished a kindly remembrance of the house of him who had saved me, perhaps, from a worse fate than death. In my wanderings I encountered a being as wretched as myself; she taught me to gratify my ruling passion by attempting to dive into futurity, to render the life of man more wretched, by foretelling the events which are to come. In the depths of the forest, in the recesses of the mountain would we invoke the power of fiends, with the malice of demons would we prepare spells to impose upon the credulity

of the ignorant, and, with horrid glee, aggravate the grief of mankind, of the wretched. Is there hope," said she, rising, "for such as I am, with the God of purity and love whom you worship?" "Even so," was the mild and soothing response of Sister Helena. "He has been leading you by a way which you knew not. He has been removing all your stays, that you may be stayed only upon Him; your father, country, mother, the protectors of your youth, every joy and comfort, and now, at the close of a long life, He calls you to Himself. Though the sins be as crimson, they shall be white as wool." The Sybil bent her head; the sweet hope of mercy softened her heart; all was quiet around, among the aged trees, whose branches shaded the venerable mansion, a nightingale had chosen her seat, and, at intervals, poured forth her soft melody. During the silence, solemn music arose from the apartments within, and a chorus of voices sang the following hymn:

Mourn not for him, whose lengthened years
Have closed in holy peace;
His home is now where neither tears
Nor sorrows find a place.
Like as the sun, in glory bright
Sank 'neath the glowing sky,
To rise again, with morning light
And greet us in the sky.
So bright, so peaceful, closed his day,
So glorious will he rise,
Jesus has pointed him the way
To bliss beyond the skies.

The sounds died away, and when the aged woman raised her head, her moistened eyes expressed her emotion. "To find objects," she continued, "on whom to wreak any vengeance I again sought the abodes of man; my predictions were heard with awe and terror; many a young heart, trobbing with hope and visions of bliss, have I caused to beat with dreaded anticipations of evil, and blasted many a dream of happiness. My unhallowed occupation was attended with danger, and, at one time my life was in jeopardy. I was threatened with torture and death, and, publicly exposed, was upon the point of meeting a deserved doom, when Nero, passing the spot, caused inquiries to be made as to the cause of the tumult. His was a heart exulting in all the evil passions of human nature, and the being at enmity with all the world might claim kindred sympathy with him. He ordered my release, and, when with sullen disdain, I denounced him, and fore-

told his crimes, he jeeringly said I should be under his protection, and forbade any interference with my vocation. But, amidst all my misery and crime, I did not forget the family which had shown me kindness. I followed their career in weal or woe; their enemies were doubly mine. Wandering in search of food, at one time a fierce wolf sprang from his lurking place, and an instant more would have ended my guilty life, but an unerring arrow, from an unseen hand, struck his heart, and he lay dead at my feet. A young Roman emerged from the thicket, and my eye immediately recognized, in his noble countenance, one of the only race whose features raised a kindly feeling in my breast. He gazed upon my haggard form with wonder. "Give God glory," said he, "He has saved you from a dreadful death." "My life is a burden," was my sullen answer, "I give thanks to no being. I own no God, and man is my deadly enemy." Again I saw the same pitying expression of countenance, which had saved me when a child. "If," said he, "man has injured you, God is your avenger; if you have injured him, God is your judge, and if you are wretched, God will be your comforter." It was the son of your love; for whose blood the tyrant thirsted, who saved me from the savage beast; whose words first caused a ray of hope to enter this dark heart." "And must this son, perish?" said the mother, in the piercing accents of grief, "must I never again see him? and my Cleone," and anguish checked her utterance. "The hours of the life of his persecutor are numbered," said the Sybil, "and not by my vain art do I know this. The city is even now in commotion; the Senate have decreed his death; hear ye not those sounds of wild uproar? Hear ye not the shouts of the soldiers?" They listened with intense attention, and the distant cries of "Death to the tyrant" were plainly distinguishable amidst the hoarse clamor of the mob; and occupied by the most anxious suspense, it was some moments ere the matron observed the sinking form of the recluse and her deathly paleness. She was prevented from summoning assistance by her sudden arousing to exertion. "His death, mother?" said she, "didst thou say his death? Will they not leave him the possibility of repentance? Would I might see him, even now!" "To what purpose," said the aged Sybil, "his heart is as the flinty rock upon which the wild waves of the ocean have beaten for ages. Thy life might be the forfeit." "Mother! the smile and word of kindly sympathy sank deep; never to be eradicated from thy remembrance; Nero! this tyrant of Rome; this monster so detested by humanity, was kind to her, who now would sacrifice life so she might kindle a spark of hope in his benighted soul." The sounds from the now fully aroused multitudes of Rome were increasing to deafening outcries, and the at-

tendants surrounded their mistress. "There are footsteps approaching," said one, and, issuing from the shaded pathway, Cleone and the faithful domestic, who had, with Lucius Flavius, accompanied her to the palace, stood before them. The heartfelt thanksgiving of her mother, as she clasped her in a close embrace, the joyous welcome of the domestics, the tears of gratitude, which stood upon the cheeks of the recluse, seemed even to awake sympathy in the stern heart of the Sybil. "But your brother, my Cleone?" "He will be saved, my own dear mother. Nero has commanded his release, and he will soon be restored to us." The silmultaneous burst of triumph around, showed the affection borne to their noble young master, and words would fail to express the joy and thankfulness which pervaded the breast of the pious mother. "I leave you for a space, dear friends," said Helena, "I leave you, rejoicing in the grace of God, and if we meet no more on earth, let me greet you in a happier home above. There," said she, raising her beautiful eyes to heaven, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor sighing." "And thou art going?" said the Sybil." "To perform my duty," said she, and disappeared in the thicket.

At this time the principle streets of Rome presented a spectacle of intense interest. A legion of the army, bearing the Imperial Eagle, the long tufts of their helmets waving in the breeze, preceded a car, guarded by cavalry, whose burnished armor reflected every ray of light, in which was seated Servius Galba, the newly elected Emperor of Rome. At intervals the brazen trumpets poured forth their triumphant notes, the deafening shouts of thousands swelled upon the air, and mingled cries of victory and execration burst from the countless multitude. As the imposing procession approached the palace of Nero, the tumult increased, the rumor spread that its detested master had fled, and the terrible ery of "death" resounded on every side. The brilliant illumination of the splendid building had faded into gloom, the music had ceased, and its inhabitants had dispersed in terror. Such are the vicissitudes of greatness. The despotic Emperor, whose mandates, but a few hours before, were obeyed with servile fear, to whose debasing pleasures the riches of the world were subservient, and for the gratification of whose malice thousands had expired in agonizing tortures, was now a despised fugitive, a proscribed criminal, proscribed alike by the laws, as well as the justice of his injured country. Amidst this tumult, with hearts throbbing with praise and thanksgiving to God, the young Christians, after Curtius had been so unexpectedly released from his prison, parted for a short time; Curtius to make glad the hearts nearest and dearest to him by his return home, and

Flavius to fulfil his engagement with Nero, to intercede with the new Emperor for the life of the miserable and despicable tyrant.

Avoiding the excited populace, two persons had, by the most obscure passages, approached the Imperial Palace; the one an aged man, wrapped in a dark tunic and supporting his steps by a staff, the other a female, closely enveloped and cautiously shielded from observation. As they drew near the colossal entrance their course was arrested by a sentry and, on requiring admittance to the presence of Nero, they were answered by derision.

"Admittance for a grey cowl! by my faith, no; but for this gear," said he, "I will warrant a passage, though shaded by a hood and enshrouded in a frieze mantle."

"Peace, rude brawler," said the aged man, "attend to thy vocation."

"My vocation now," said the fierce soldier, "is to silence such greybeards as thou," but, as he raised his truncheon, the female, raising her hood, and stepping before her companion, said:

"Wouldst thou harm one to whom the Father of all things has alotted so long a term of life? Suffer us to pass to the presence of Nero and accept the thanks of one who has no other guerdon to bestow."

Struck by the transcendant beauty of the suppliant and awed by her manner, he lowered his weapon, but still refused admittance to her companion.

"If his tongue wag not too freely," said he, "yonder bench may afford him a resting place; for thee, fair one, if it chooseth the, thou mayst try thy fortune within, but, by the powers of Erebus, I warn you not to pursue the venture. Dost thou hear the commotion and uproar of the city? and the near approach of the tumult? Within the palace there is confusion: the lights are extinguished and, methinks, there is danger in the wind. Best retrace thy way, pretty one, with thy crusty fellow-traveler; his journey of life is too nearly ended to be an able protector for thee."

"If there is danger, friend, why dost thou stay to encounter it?"

"I am a Roman soldier," said he, proudly; my post is here and, come what may, I shall retain it."

"I, too, soldier, have my post of duty; for thee, father, I pray thee return by the unfrequented path we traced on our way hither."

"I leave thee not, my daughter," said the old man, but will rest my wearied limbs a brief period; in the meantime, may the Lord bless thy purpose!"

"Amen, holy father," said the recluse, for with the hope that at this moment of terror the stubborn heart of Nero might be

led to contrition, she, who had once been as the day-star of his life, had now sought his presence, fearless of her own risk, in confronting his revengeful rage.

A slave guided her steps through the lofty halls, whose arched ceilings glittered with representations of the starry firmament, while showers of sweet fragrance filled the air with odors. Ere they had passed far they encountered many slaves who, with hurried steps, were hastening to the entrance.

"How go matters now, Curio?" said the guide.

"Lacca has returned," said the one addressed. "The Legions are in motion; Servius Galba is proclaimed Emperor and Nero has fled. Save thyself, Arrius, hearest thou not the approach of the insurgents?"

"Nero fled!" said the startled guide. "A truce to thine errand, then, fair lady. Thou art too late."

"Too late indeed," she said, clasping her hands in anguish. "Yet, stay, friend." It was vain, for the alarmed servitor had followed his fellow slaves; and uncertain and distressed, she stood irresolute, which way to shape her course. At this moment the Sybil stood before her.

"Said I not his hour of mercy had passed?" said she. "A night of hopeless gloom has closed around him, and clouds envelope the sweet star of mercy. Said I not so?"

"Hope is not lost, mother," said the recluse. "Shall we limit the power of the Omnipotent? There is yet hope, even for Nero." The roar of inflamed and furious thousands now broke upon their ears. The Palatine hill was surrounded and, with speed unparalelled in one so aged, the Sybil drew her companion along a narrow entrance to a secluded path which led through the magnificent gardens of the palace, now deserted by all save straggling bands of fugitives. "Stay, mother," said the recluse, "Father Paulo is left behind. He awaits us near yon column." As they drew near the aged priest rose from his reclining posture. "Blessings on His Name, daughter, for that he hath returned thee in safety. Let no harrowing fears perplex thee for him whom thou hast sought to save; he hath sown the wind and he must reap the whirlwind. "His Holy Name be blessed," said the recluse; and, in silence, they passed on their way. The soft plashing of the fountains, whose lucid drops sparkled in the moonbeams, the dewy freshness of the lawns, and the gentle breathing of the night air contrasted with the wild fury behind them and the storm of unbridled vengeance which now encompassed the palace and shook even its foundation, soothed the perturbed spirit and hushed each murmuring passion to peace.

Herbert closed the book. "It must be deeply interesting," said he, "to visit this ancient city. Its scenes are so intimately connected with events of history which are familiar to us from childhood, and so many of its features must remain unaltered. The ancient tombs are still there, the same old pavements are frequently unearthed which were trod by those heroes whose names are familiar to us as 'household words,' and whose stones have been swept by the royal purple. The Tiber will still pursue its winding course, and the lofty Appenines still bound the prospect, although time demolishes its mighty works of art." "Was not Virgil born under the Roman government, Herbert?" said Charles. "He was, and highly favored by Augustus Caesar, the most powerful monarch of Rome." "Do you think there were such delightful rural scenes in those times as he describes in his Pastorals?" said Susan. "In the earlier days of Rome," said Herbert, "before luxury and its attendant vices had enervated and destroyed the energies of the country, the employments of the husbandman and shepherd formed the principal occupations of the people; to excel in agriculture was to acquire a title to public respect, and some of their most powerful dictators and bravest commanders were 'taken from the plough.' At the time to which our story refers, husbandry was regarded with less respect than in former times. The cultivation of the fields was often committed to the care of slaves; the introduction of foreign luxuries had paved the way for crime in all its forms, and from that time the progress of the nation was downward. The pleasant scenes of country life, described by Virgil, were probably drawn from nature, embellished, perhaps, with a poet's license." "But the beauty of these Arcadian scenes," said Mrs. Wilson, "is associated in our minds with the idea of innocence and virtue; we believe they were happy, surrounded by these scenes of rural beauty, because they were good." "True," said Herbert, "let us but imagine their delightful groves, their breezy hills and green pastures to be the resorts of vice and crime, the charm is broken at once; we no longer dream of the beauty of the 'spreading beech,' the rich taste of the 'golden apples,' or the sweet murmuring of the 'mossy fountains'; instead of the bright sunshine of peace and happiness, the gloomy clouds of sin and misery would disfigure every beauty." "Such is the effect of virtue," said his mother, every charm is heightened by its presence, and every beauty destroyed by its absence." "How pleasant," said Susan, "to read Virgil's description of a northern winter, over a bright fire!" "The pleasures of his winter evenings, however," said Mary, "were confined to frolic and play, and their

refreshments to 'acid cider and beer'; how different from our evenings, where there are 'fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness.'" "Yes," said Elizabeth, "and, to continue your quotation:

> "'Discourse, not trivial, yet not dull;
> Not such as, with a frown, forbids the play
> Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth.'"

Chapter X

The seeds of virtue should be sown;
God will protect their growth.

Circumstances intervened to prevent the continuation of the "Tale" for a short time but, on the evening of the Sabbath day, Herbert read a sacred poem upon the subject of Christ's restoring the sight of the blind.

Land of a chosen race, the gift of God,
Whose soil the feet of holy patriarchs trod,
Thy fertile valleys, bright in summer's glow,
Thy cloudless skies, illumining all below,
Thy mountains, snowy with their thousand flocks,
And sweetest honey flowing from thy rocks,
Call for the grateful praise, the adoring thanks
Of Him who highest in creation ranks.
Say: has that being life, who views this scene
With dull, cold eye, and an unaltered mien?
Turn, proud descendant of a cherished line!
Mark the rich gifts, and bless the Power divine;
Let thine eye rest on fields of waving grain,
In bright luxuriance, waving o'er the plain,
On groves of olives, round the green hill's side,
And clustering vineyards stretching far and wide,
On splendid palaces, the city's boast,
And cottages, 'midst sheltering foliage lost,
Shaded from noon-tide's radiant burning beam,
The seats of calm and deep repose they seem;
Then, on that suffering object cast your eye,
Who sits, dejected, 'neath yon glowing sky;
'Midst all this beauty, all this calm repose,
No soothing joy the lonely blind man knows;
Dark, dark, to him, this smiling scene appears,
Gloomy and sad the livery nature wears;
The brightening smile of love can never meet
His answering glance; the sun will rise and set,
But its bright beams can never meet his sight,
Clouded by one long, dark and dreary night.
Spring, with its opening green, its fragrant flowers,
Its rich luxuriance, and its rosy bowers,

Blooms not for him; a blank of shadowy gloom
O'er past and future marks a saddened doom.
Is there no ray of hope to cheer his way?
No gleam of light, foretelling future day?
Through the proud streets of Jericho there ran
A rumor of a strange and godlike man,
Who, sprung from David's ancient honored line,
His birth foretold by prophecy and sign,
By his whole life, holy and just and pure,
By mighty skill, deadly disease to cure,
By wonders wrought, unknown to mortal power,
Had forced even haughty sceptics to adore.
Would not this wondrous stranger lend his aid
To the poor, lowly blind man in his need?
Mark but his attitude of listening hope!
His anxious face turned toward that distant group,
Whose noisy murmurs strike upon his ear
Like sounds of soothing joy and welcome cheer;
Nearer and nearer yet the tumult pours,
And like the dashing wave of ocean roars;
Did not the blind man's heart beat high with joy
When told, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by"?
At that all-powerful name, long, dreary years
And days of misery and nights of tears
Are like a dismal dream, and a bright dawn
Seems rising o'er his heart, a rapturous morn;
His blood, long chilled by wretchedness and pain,
Flows with a warmer current through each vein,
And, by unwonted strength impelled, his voice
Rose clear and loud above the mingled noise;
"Thou, Son of David, mercy;" and the prayer,
"Have mercy on me," echoed through the air.
Ah! who could see that sightless being stand,
Wretched and poor, without one helping hand;
And, with cold-hearted selfishness forbid
That cry for mercy in his suffering need.
But 'twere as easy to impede the course
Of the swol'n current, or control its force
As check the overpowering prayer of faith,
While still the suppliant has the power of breath,
Still rose that prayer, still gathering strength it rose,
"Have mercy on me," its unvarying close.
That prayer was not unheard, for He, whose ear
Is ever open, now, Himself, drew near.
Now, now, Bartimeus, rise; He calleth thee;

"Be of good comfort, even thou mayst see;"
Quick, through the parting crowd, they guide his way
Till, suppliant, at the Saviour's feet he lay,
On whose calm brow a shade of pity spread.
"What wouldst thou I should do for thee?" he said.
Riches and honors, what would they avail?
Health and long life? alas! such gifts would fail
To cast one beam of joy o'er the sad doom
Of him, condemned to live in endless gloom;
"Lord, that I might receive my sight," he cried.
"Thy faith hath made thee whole," Jesus replied.
Moment of blissful joy! resplendent light
Breaks through the dark, thick film of dreary night,
The sunbeams, sparkling on the clear blue stream,
The brightening sky, and summer's vivid green,
The face of man, all meet his wondering sight,
And fill his thankful heart with new delight.
Nor words nor thoughts can picture what he feels,
As, with full heart, at Jesus's feet he kneels.
Almighty Savior! thou art ever near,
The fainting soul to comfort and to cheer;
Give us the blind man's joy, the blind man's faith,
Trust in our lives, and brightening hope in death.

"How deserted are now those scenes of such great and mighty interest! Jericho, once the stronghold of the ancient Canaanites, then a populous and probably magnificent city of the Jews, is now a small and mean village, the abode of a few Arabs, and its once beautiful plains, through which flows the sacred river of Jordan, are almost as dead and inanimate as the waters of the sea in its vicinity, where the proud and guilty cities of former days were buried. "Sin, in its varied forms," said Mrs. Wilson, has brought this desolation on this chosen land, this land, more blessed and favored than all others, not only in its natural advantages, but as the land which God had selected to display His omnipotent power, and where the Savior of the world passed the short but eventful years of his life upon earth. Let our prayers, my children, ascend to the Giver of all good, that He will check, in our hearts, ever, the slightest indication to evil, for the consequences are always misery." "What a misfortune, to be blind," said Susan. "I can scarcely imagine a more desolate condition than that of a person totally blind." "It is not always so," returned Elizabeth, "I have heard it said that blind people were frequently more contented, more uniformly placid in their dispositions than many who can see. Is it so, mother?" "I knew a

blind man," said Mrs. Wilson, "the whole tenor of whose life would justify us in that belief. He was always quiet and calm, of a pleasant countenance, and there was an habitual smile about his mouth which would seem to express the sunshine of his heart. He would sometimes ramble about, without any guide but his cane, feeling his way by the walls and fences, but never attempting to leave these way-marks without some helping hand, frequently claiming the assistance of the children of the village, which was never refused. His home was a happy one, consisting of his aged father, his brother, and a relative of the family, who acted as housekeeper, but was, in reality, considered as daughter and sister, and whose kindly heart led her to make the life of poor Joseph as happy as it was possible to render it. In his solitude, when confined to the house by the inclemency of the weather, he would dictate verses for some one to write, and, however they might be wanting in smoothness, or correct diction, although even the sense might be doubtful, yet there was a strain of piety and reliance on God which showed a heart resigned to His will. The peaceful grave has closed over him and his death was calm and gentle as his life. And now, with grateful thanks to God for all his goodness, we will retire to rest."

The day was clear and bright, the sky without a cloud, and the pure white snow covered with a glittering crust, which did not fail beneath the weight when Herbert proposed a short walk, to which the younger part of the little community readily assented. The air was keen and bracing, but they were well defended from it, and the sunbeams were warm and pleasant. Charles was full of life and glee, and bounding forward was ready to point to any object which he thought worthy of notice. "And do you know, Susan," said he, "Uncle Bill says the worst of the winter weather is over, and that there are many signs that we shall have an early spring?" "I am in no hurry to have the winter pass away," replied Susan, "and am in a good mind to be sorry for the signs of spring, but, Herbert, you have not yet given us any clue to the history of Uncle Bill, and if you will but remember, you promised it, menacing me, at the same time, with some terrible illustration of female caprice." "You shall hear it, my dear Susan, and remember though it may have been the subject of some sport to us, the consequences have been almost death to him. His youth was prosperous and happy; though not possessed of brilliant talents, his powers of mind were good, and he united to them an activity and enterprise which soon placed him in a situation of trust and profit, in the city of Philadelphia. His relations were all of the Society of Friends; he was patronized and esteemed by the mem-

bers of that wealthy and respectable sect in that city, and, by his intercourse with refined society, both in England and America, for the business in which he was engaged required frequent voyages across the Atlantic, his manners became polished, which, added to his naturally graceful and unaffected demeanor, rendered him an universal favorite. He became attached and offered himself to a beautiful girl, a daughter of one of the wealthy and influential citizens of the place; with the sanction of her friends, his suit was encouraged; and, as much happiness as this world can give dawned upon his prospects. His bright hope of bliss was overclouded, for, after a year of assiduous affection on his part, and apparent kindness and complacency upon her own, a change came over the 'dream of his hope,' and, without assigning any reason for her inconstancy or fickleness, she no longer received his attentions with pleasure, and with cruel indifference to his feelings, required their discontinuance. Thunderstruck at this blow to his dearest hopes, he attempted to avert it, but her cold adherence to her determination, and the bitter scorn with which she treated his remonstrances, convinced him that she had never possessed any true affection for him. Quick and sensitive as he was he felt in every pore her unkind treatment, it undermined his health, destroyed the energy of his mind and, when he found, some months afterward, that her marriage with another was to be celebrated, the total overthrow of every hope completed the prostration of his mind and body. A severe illness followed; after a long period, his naturally good constitution triumphed, and he regained health, but the vigor and activity of his mental faculties were gone forever. He returned to his business, but, wholly unfitted for the necessary application to its duties, he allowed himself to fall into habits of carelessness and inattention, which resulted in a heavy pecuniary loss to the establishment with which he was connected. Mortification and the fear of disgrace were now added to the feelings of wretchedness which oppressed him, and he sought relief in dissipation. This was the climax of his fate; from that time he sank lower and lower, though, struggling with his ruin, he would, at times, forswear the intoxicating wine cup, and the debasing gaming house, yet, the energy of his character, never firm, was lost. His connections in business were dissolved, and his friends, to save the remnant of his fortune, removed him from the scene, alike of his happiness and misery, and brought him back to his early home. Still, all efforts to restore his mind were vain, and, though in time, he lost some sense of his unhappiness and blasted hopes, he was but the wreck of his former self. He wanders about like a child, amusing himself with childish pleasures; attaching himself warm-

ly to those who are kind and gentle to him, but feeling, with the most distressing sensibility, any imaginary slight. This, then, Susan, is the melancholy history of 'Uncle Bill,' as he is now universally called." "Oh! I shall never laugh again, when I see him; poor, poor, Uncle Bill." "But what," said Mary, "was the fate of the thoughtless wicked girl, who was the cause of this ruin?" "I know nothing of her after life, but that it was not long." "I think," said Elizabeth, "that he must have possessed a weak intellect, or it would not have yielded so easily to such base treatment. I think, Herbert, that indignation would have triumphed in your heart, over every other emotion." "I do not know, my sister, but I most sincerely hope that I may never bestow an affection of my heart upon so heartless a being." With an unanimous assent to this hope, they now bent their steps home.

Chapter XI

Glory, the glory of the world, its triumphs and its pride
What are its fleeting honors worth?

Meeting again at evening, and each being engaged in some useful avocation, Herbert continued their course of reading the tale of the early Christians.

With a hasty step Lucius Flavius pursued his way through the streets of the city, thronged with persons of every rank and degree, on whose countenances might be traced emotions of every different kind. In some, the wondering stare of idle curiosity mingled with the vacant look of indifference as to what events were transpiring; in others, the animated glance of triumphant success, with the look and gesture of determined vengeance. Here stood a group whose debauched features and downcast expression proclaimed that they were companions of the infamous pleasures of Nero, and that in his downfall they lamented the loss of a protecting patron, and there, a crowd, who having been deeply injured by the tyrant, were venting their impotent rage by mutilating his statues, and tearing down the garlands which had decorated them. The name of Nero, repeated, was coupled with the deepest execrations, but Flavius stopped not to inquire his fate. Forcing his way through the dense multitude, which surrounded the palace of Servius Galba, he required of a guard to be admitted to his presence, and while awaiting the return of his messenger contemplated, with interest, the scene before him. The brilliant illumination of the building cast a broad light upon the adjacent objects, and a radiant reflection was thrown back from the glittering armor of the long lines of soldiers. The roar of the rapidly increasing crowd sounded from afar like the tempestuous waves of the ocean, while the strict discipline of the army prevented any demonstrations of disorder immediately around the palace. Amidst the distant uproar, the name of Galba was reiterated with joyful acclamations, mingled with deep and terrible denunciations of death for the tyrant. Such, thought the young Roman, is the mutability of greatness; but his reflections were interrupted by a favorable answer to his request for admittance, and he followed an attendant to the presence of the Emperor. Surrounded by some of the most powerful and influential citizens of Rome, with the flush of successful ambition upon his brow, and a proud joy flashing from his eyes, stood Servius Galba, arrayed in

the imperial purple, and a crown of laurel upon his head. Advancing a few steps to meet and receive the congratulatory homage of the young noble, he said, with an exulting smile, "The Fates have been propitious, my lord Flavius, the reign of despotism and disgrace is at an end; the Senate have confirmed the election of the Army, and we will commence our reign by an act of clemency towards that obnoxious sect, who are turning the world upside down by their heresys. It might perhaps be policy," said he, addressing those who were near, "to extend mercy to some of these offenders, we find, after long experience in these matters, that opposition but increases their obstinacy." "The young Roman, Quintius Curtius, is already liberated, noble Galba," said Flavius, "and I now appear to offer my service to return you most hearty thanks for your intercession, and to perform a condition, upon the fulfilment of which the miserable tyrant insisted ere he granted the life of my friend." "Aye," said Galba, "he released him, then; he treated my intercession with insolent contumely, and by his arrogant menaces hastened the consummation of the events to which I alluded in our last interview. Perhaps it is best so; but, my friend, caution this young fanatic; he has talents and noble abilities, if rightly applied, and if he will not, by his imprudent enthusiasm, thwart my measures, for your sake, I will see to his advancement." This was said in a lower tone, then aloud. "But this condition which has been imposed by the imperious homicide; what is its purport?" "Merely, noble Emperor, that I should intercede with you that his life might be spared, which petition I now humbly lay before you, representing that his power is now impotent, that mercy is the attribute of heaven, and that, imitating this attribute, when power is given us so to do, we may the more boldly claim it in our hour of need." "You say well, noble Flavius, but this matter is beyond my control. The Senate have decreed the punishment, which, severe and harsh as it may seem, is so richly his due. He is sentenced to be dragged through the streets he has degraded by his infamous excesses, and disgraced by his outrageous cruelties, scourged, and then thrown from the Tarpeian Rock. I have, however," said he, addressing Flavius in a confidential tone, "caused my freedman to follow and warn him of this decree, and he may yet escape its horrors by a voluntary death." "A most dreadful alternative," said Flavius, "but, may he not yet elude it? He is not destitue of partisans." "It is not possible," said the Emperor, "the avenues are guarded, he has been traced to his villa, and escape is impracticable. This has been an eventful night, my countrymen, may the dawn see Rome fully emancipated from her disgraceful thraldom. For the present, Lucius Flavius, farewell, preparations must be made for

the ceremonies of the day; you shall be instructed as to our future proceedings."

The first faint appearance of the dawn of day was seen, the fleecy clouds were dispersing before the gradual approach of light, and the thin mist arose around the tops of the mountains, when, at the entrance of a rugged ravine, skirted by the highroad, stood a man partially concealed by a clump of trees, apparently watching for the appearance of some one. He was pale and haggard, and, at every distant noise would cower into his retreat, and listen with the most intense eagerness. The sweet sounds of the morning had commenced in the soft twitterings of the birds over his head, and its breezy breath played upon his parched lips and feverish brow, but without bestowing serenity to his spirit, or affording refreshment to his wearied frame. His impatience seemed to increase as the shades of night gave way before the rosy hues that betokened the approach of day, and as those tokens rapidly increased, as the tops of the mountains, and the distant spires of the city caught the first gleam of the rising sun, as the far off horn of the shepherd was heard collecting his flock for their rich pasture, it almost amounted to agony. It was Anicetus, the freedman, the wretched agent of his wretched master, who, flying from fear of the vengeance due to his crimes, here awaited the coming of one, who, formerly his fellow servant, he believed would not betray him, and, from whom he might learn, with certainty, the state of the public mind. What, to him, was the smiling face of nature or the bright beams of the sun? Midnight gloom and lowering tempest would have been more congenial to his guilty soul. As he stood motionless, his heavy eyes cast upon the ground, and his knit brow shaded in gloom, a squirrel sprang from the covert upon a decayed branch directly before him, as the sprightly animal stood, with his fearless innocent eyes, glancing around, the miserable man gnashed his teeth, and in the impotence of his rage that any living thing should be happy, aimed a blow, which the active animal eluded, the next instant standing upon the topmost bough of a lofty tree, chattering in his joyous glee. The thought of happiness was hateful to him, as he remembered the scene he had just left, and the imminent danger of his own situation. He had seen the master whom, from his earliest childhood he had instructed in evil, to whose base and wicked passions he had ever been subservient, but, to whom, if his corrupt heart ever felt the sensation of affection, he was more attached than to any living thing, breathe out his guilty soul in all the horrors of dispair; had seen him dreading the approach of death, and evading its final grasp by every futile expedient. He had assisted in gathering a funeral pile in that garden, where so much luxury

had reigned, and which had so often been the resort of crime and pollution; he had prepared the deadly draught at the command of the abject Emperor, and had seen him reject it in horror. He had joined in chanting a dirge for the dead; a dirge for the master, in whose veins at that moment the current of life was warm and glowing and, with trembling hand had opened those veins, that life might pass away with the red stream; then, with hurried alarm, arrested its flow by strong bandages, as the ghastly and shuddering tyrant, shrinking from the abyss over which his wretched soul was hovering, asserted that his time had not yet come. To close the frightful scene, he, in the last moment, held the glittering weapon, while Nero, the tyrant of his country, the bitter and untiring persecutor of the unoffending Christians, rushed upon its point, anad closed that life, which had been a curse to the world; and now, he found himself alone, exposed to a just and terrible retribution, which awaited his own crimes, and his connivance at those of another. But now, the tramp of a horse became distinctly audible, and a rider, wearing the livery of Servius Galba, appeared, in rapid emotion, for the city. As he approached the thicket its occupant moved forward, evidently wishing to be seen. "Ha!" said the horseman, stopping, "you here, Anicetus, like a wolf in his lair? By Jupiter, old acquaintance, it would have been well to have lived, so that you need not fear to be seen." "No more of that," said the freedman, in a sullen tone, "did you perform the service I requested?" "We laid the body upon the pile you had collected, and, kindling the flame, the thick smoke arose in the morning air, grim and black as the pit of Erebus." "That is a good deed done, comrade; I owe you much; his body is then beyond their reach, 'twas his last request; I can trust you, old friend, what is my safest course?" "Leave Rome behind you; track your way through the most unfrequented paths to some distant land, and, in quitting your country, leave all your sins and ill-gotten treasures, that you may travel light. You will not be safe here an hour, the scent is up, and the hunters will not flag." "Say you so, then farewell to Rome; thanks to the gods, there are other skies, the air of this place seems damp and unwholesome." "The atmosphere is clearing, friend, it will work itself pure shortly. Farewell. Fear not that I shall betray you. May the gods prompt you to lead a better life, and provide you a better master." He pursued his way to the city, and the dark and guilty man, plunging into the ravine, was lost to sight.

"The environs of Rome," said Herbert, "once so delightful, are now but a dreary waste, with no human habitation or fertile fields; the melancholy ruins of former greatness, scattered here

and there, but add to the desolation and the poisonous exhalations from stagnant marshes have driven almost all life from its desert soil." "Why should this air be so infectious?" said Mary; "it surely was not so in former times, for, had it been, the Roman territories would not have been so populous." "The lands around the city in the bright days of Rome," said Herbert, "were highly cultivated; they were drained of their superabundant moisture, trees were planted and rich vineyards cherished; the whole extent of territory around the great emporium was like a garden, supplying the wants of the immense population; the inhabitants lived under their own vines and fig trees, and had every inducement to industry, and every encouragement to render their soil as fertile as possible, and peace and prosperity was the consequence. But, when powerful, barbarous nations, allured by the riches and splendor of Rome, and probably foreseeing that her inhabitants, enervated by luxury and long-continued prosperity, would become an easy prey to their rapacity, poured upon the rich and beautiful plains of Italy, devastation and ruin marked their course. The fruitful trees were cut down, the vineyards defaced, the drains and aqueducts destroyed, the inhabitants slain, or, saving themselves by flight, and their pleasant dwellings leveled with the ground. Disheartened and discouraged, the Roman people no longer possessed the energy to combat with their fate. They forsook their ruined plains and the noxious vapors arising from the deserted fields, producing disease and pestilence, gave up all thought of repairing the ravages of war. The mischief has been gradually increasing and threatens, at some future day, to make the "Eternal City," as it has been named, like Babylon of old, the residence of only noisome reptiles." "It is sad," said his mother, "to reflect upon the fate of these mighty nations, and to know that their downfall was the consequence of their crimes. May luxury, with its long train of evils, be far from our own native land!" "Shall I interpret your looks, Susan?" remarked Herbert, smiling; "you are thinking that, though luxury may be a great evil, you would rather prefer a little of it; that you should not exactly like the frugal meals of the old Romans, 'a radish and an egg, under an oak.'" "You are partly right, Herbert," said she, "notwithstanding their simplicity, patriotism and bravery, and all that sort of things, there is something revolting in some of their manners and customs; witness the little ceremony used in procuring their wives in those early days." "That was when Rome was first founded, Susan," said Charles. "Those were not what Herbert calls the bright days of Rome." "True, true, my little critic," said Herbert; "simplicity, in the days referred to by Susan, was barbarism, and

patriotism and bravery then were often questionable virtues." "Were there any such really brave and good men, at those times, as Gen. George Washington?" said Charles. "Their greatest and best men," said Mrs. Wilson, had not that light to guide them which he possessed. The paths, to him like noonday, were to them enveloped in shadowy gloom; but in no age has there ever lived a man who more truly deserved to be 'first in the hearts of his countrymen' than Washington, the pride and boast of America. His firm and steady prudence, his sound discretion and unwavering integrity, his noble courage, and, above all, his unswerving trust in Providence, render him the model of all greatness. Other conquerors sought their own aggrandizement; he, only that of his country; they trampled on all laws, human and divine, to attain their purposes; his great aim and object was the happiness of the world as well as that of his beloved country." "The death of Washington," said Herbert, "proved the estimation in which he was held by the nation. They knew not, until then, how much they had relied upon his penetrating judgment and firm perseverance, his incorruptible integrity and unshaken patriotism; that star was removed whose steady ray had uniformly pointed to the path of true glory and a mist seemed for a time to envelope the world. The most enthusiastic honors were paid to his memory; his loss was deplored from one extremity of the country to the other; even prattling babes were clothed in the symbols of mourning and, had this great and good man lived in the days of heathen Rome, he would have been deified and honored as a god. Orators, in eloquent language, poured forth his praises and poets chose their noblest strains for his honor; malice and envy found no place for their inuendoes and the smoothing hand of time was not needed to fix his glorious character."

Chapter XII

How oft the fickle multitude have climbed
Those battlements, to hail some mighty lord,
Whom, ere the changing moon had run her course,
They spurned, as a base reptile.

The next leisure evening was devoted to the conclusion of the Roman Tale.

The day of freedom from oppression dawned upon Rome. The short period of repose had renewed the excitement and activity of the populace, who, aroused by tidings of the fate of Nero, and enraged that he had escaped their vengeance, wreaked it upon every object marked by the favor of the tyrant Emperor. Nothing but the strictest orders, enforced by a powerful guard of soldiers, preserved the splendid palace, "The Golden House," the rich abode of the luxurious Nero, from destruction, but his statues, and those which he had caused to be erected in honor of his chosen favorites, were demolished with the most bitter imprecations. Again the shouts of triumph and rejoicing would peal through the air and with the wildest enthusiasm the people assumed the peculiar cap worn by the slaves upon their restoration to freedom, as a token that they, too, were freed from bondage. Garlands of laurel adorned the streets, were twined around the colonnades of the buildings, and hung in festoons from the projecting balconies, and, as the triumphal chariot of the new Emperor, surrounded by the imposing array of military pomp, passed slowly through the crowded ways, toward the Capitol, to attend the ceremonies of the day, showers of roses descended upon him and music hailed his progress. Paeans arose from the temples and the odor of incense made the air fragrant. The Amphitheatre, destined that day to have been the scene of torture and death, was left in silence and solitude, a general jubilee was proclaimed, prisoners were released, and all executions were suspended.

Beneath a low-browed arch sat the Thessalian Sybil; her form was more attenuated, the excitement and fatigue of the night had worn upon her aged frame, but her still keen eyes watched the motions of the crowd and her lips were moving with suppressed thought. A citizen, whose lameness precluded his attendance upon the procession, was gazing upon her as he leaned upon

his crutches. "Mother," said he, "the Destinies have suffered your thread of life to stretch far." She raised her eyes to his face. "Didst thou mark the gay pageant, citizen of Rome?" "Aye, did I; by my troth," was the answer, "it was a goodly sight." "It has passed before me as a shadow," she said, "as the mist of the morning, indistinct and fading. It is a few days since these eyes beheld the murdered body of your great Caesar born through these streets, in mournful array; since these ears heard the din of civil war through these lands, when brother fought against brother, and father against son; heard the exultant shouts proclaiming the mighty Augustus Emperor of Rome, and saw the massy gates of Janus closed, as the signal of peace upon earth. I have heard rejoicing and triumph echo through this city at the commencement of a reign, and still louder rejoicing at its close. I have seen a stately temple arise, dedicated to thy gods, the incense streaming from its altars, mingling with that of one consecrated to Caligula; but a few years rolled on and he met his death from the parasites who aided in the blasphemy. The wind which now breathes softly around us, and which, a few short hours having passed, may sweep the plains in its fury, is not more variable than this fickle populace. Again and again exulting shouts and bitter curses follow each other in quick succession and will do so till the glory of this proud city is shrouded in the dust." She had uttered these words in a low, but deep and earnest tone; her head rested upon her hands and her elbows upon her knees; the soliloquy she had commenced to the person who had stood near her seemed to have been, in part, the utterance of the recollections of her life, without reference to any listener. Another citizen passing, "Thou are weatherbound, Rutilius," addressing the lame man, "the gods console thee; thou hast lost a glorious spectacle." "May the Furies seize the unwieldy Goth who crippled my limbs!" was the answer. "Describe the show, Curio." "Thou shouldst have seen the noble Emperor Galba; with what a gracious dignity he accepted the homage of the Senate, and the oaths of the soldiery, and heard his oration to the people; how he thanked them for their suffrages; and how the priests in their solemn array offering sacrifices, as the smoke of the incense arose in clouds before them, sang paeans to the deities, and the pealing notes reverberated around the lofty ceiling. In good truth, friend, thy limbs have proved recreant in this matter." "Rome will thrive under the reign of this Galba," said Rutilius. "There will be something going on beside these dismal executions, of which we may well be weary." "More, by token," said the other, when every day renewed them. By the powers above! it joys my heart that the noble Curtius has escaped

the lions. Didst note his princely aspect when he confronted the tyrant in the Forum? It were worse than tyranny to immolate such a Roman."

An aged man stood listening to the discourse. "The fangs of the ferocious beasts," he said, "were mercy to the inhuman cruelty of Nero. The gods have at length awarded his doom, but the marks of his malice and fury are deeply printed upon our city."

"Most deeply in thy heart, old Crispus, thou hast good cause to curse the memory of Nero."

"Have I not! Curio," said the old man, his gleaming eyes and trembling limbs bespeaking his emotion, "where is my brave, my noble boy, the support of my years, the idol of my love? Was not his life sacrificed, daring to brave the vengeance of that human monster, to wrest the wife of his love from even a more dreadful fate than his own, from a more bloody beast than the one that tore his mangled limbs?" Grief soon choked every other emotion, and large tears rolled down his withered cheeks.

"Nay, good Crispus, nay; time has softened thy sorrow; do not renew it." "Rome will be at peace, now," said Rutilius, "so, mother," continued he, addressing the aged woman, who had appeared sunk in stupor, "thou mayst add another to thy list of changes." Her vacant gaze would have betokened inattention to his address, but, as he spoke, she arose, though with difficulty, and her voice, though clear and distinct, was faint. "Ye are the creatures of change," said she; "the idol of one hour, ye contemn the next. There is One," and her tone changed to a deep solemnity, "who is said to be the same yesterday, today, and forever! Believest thou in the God of the Christians?"

"Not I, mother, and methinks if thou dost, it is well for thine aged limbs that Nero is not Emperor of Rome."

"The years of my life are closing," she said; "the thick darkness which brooded over them is dispersing, the strength of this weary body is failing, but light dawns upon the benighted soul. Listen," said she, her voice becoming more firm, "ere the number of the days of my life have again passed, thine haughty Emperors will acknowledge this God; these gilded temples will echo with His worship, and the altars of thy false gods be overthrown in the dust from whence they sprang."

As they listened to her predictions with fixed attention she sank again upon the step from which she had arisen. In a low and soft cadence she continued: "The sweet music of my childhood's home sounds in mine ears, the fragrance of its fields steals over my senses, and my pulse vibrates to the joyous measure of the dancing virgins." Her face became more deathly pale, her utterance more broken. "Go," said she, "to the noble Roman, Quintius

Curtius, say to him that Sagana, the Thessaiian, with her dying breath implores a resing place beneath the cypress which shades the grave of her mother; go; and thou, too, in thy last need, shalt find a friend."

Her head drooped upon a projection of rock, her eyes closed, but as her spirit departed the rigid lines of her face relaxed and a calm, serene expression stole over it, unknown to her life.

" 'Tis the old witch of the mountain," said Curio, "as very a Hecate as ever took the form of an old woman."

"I'll not do her bidding," said Rutilius.

"That will I," said Crispius; "if these aged limbs will support me, if the God of the Christians be her God, I will go on her errand for the sake of my departed Cleia, the darling of my murdered boy; she owned no other deity." So saying, the good old man adjusted the mantle over her marble features and, with slow steps, pursued his way to the Appian palace.

"These Christians will be growing bold, now," said Rutilius.

"Aye, that will they," said Curio; "but it behooves them to be cautious, for Galba, albeit not a Nero, is no friend to their rigid doctrine." The two citizens departed and the remains of the being whose protracted years had now reached their end, whose life of misery had closed in peace, were left alone. From the time when wandering in solitary wretchedness, she had been led by a Hand which she knew not near the secluded abode of the pious Helena, had encountered the kind and lovely recluse, listened to her soothing consolations, and had suffered her thoughts to rise from the polluted depths of sin and despair, to the pure and holy Heaven of hope, her perturbed spirit had been gradually settling into peaceful rest. From this dark world her desires ascended to one of light and joy and, though born and reared amidst the gloom of Paganism, the bright beams of Christianity had pierced the shadowy cloud. Alone, in a cold and friendless world, she had lived, beset with trials and temptations; she had now gone to an everlasting Friend, to One whose all-seeing eye had watched her steps; whose Almighty arm had sustained her, and who, in her last hours, had poured consolation into her bruised and sorrowing heart.

The wild tumult of the mighty multitude reached not the peaceful home of the revered Christian. As the sun arose in his morning splendor, the majestic old trees, which surrounded the dwelling, cast their gently waving shadows over the portico, where, in sweet communion, sat the young Curtius and his sister. The breezy fragrance of the early day was wafted as mild incense to their senses, the clear soft music of the birds filled the air as an offering to the Giver of all good, while afar, in the distant val-

leys, borne upon the murmuring gale, was heard the mingled sounds of rural life; the shepherd's call, the answering flock, and lowing cattle, contrasted happily with the harsher sounds from the extended streets of the city. At intervals, from within the ancient, but still stately dwelling, the solemn hymn, in honor of the noble dead, would swell in full chorus, and the rich melody would almost lead the soul of the listener to the heaven to which it directed its thoughts. During its pauses, some old minstrel, who had followed the fortunes of the family, through weal and through woe, in shrill, but animated recitative, would rehearse its greatness, its long line of renowned ancestors, their brave exploits and princely endowments, and, as he ended by striking some high and lofty notes upon his harp, the pealing sounds would arouse in the breasts of the faithful retainers of the illustrious departed a portion of the enthusiastic animation with which they had followed their lords to the field of battle. The pride of birth, though subdued and regulated by the power of religion, glowed in the hearts of the young listeners, in whose persons were united the almost regal houses from whom they counted their descent.

"This spot, my sister," said Curtius, "is all that is left us of the worldly wealth of our ancestors, but the legacy they have bequeathed of incorruptible virtue, of integrity not to be bribed by the allurements of pleasure, or the rewards of ambition, their patriotism, and undaunted bravery, joined to the still richer one of our pious father, makes us heirs of an inheritance not to be weighed with the riches of this world. And mark, sweet sister," he continued, "the ruling hand of God. Yesternight, the setting sun saw the tyrant Emperor surrounded with the riches of a tributary world; from the banks of the Tiber to the farthest shores of Britain, he ruled with despotic sway; yet his power and splendor have vanished as a tale that is told; while the prisoner, whose anticipations of the light of this day, but for mighty support, must have been of agony and terror, is restored to the blessings of life and liberty."

"Oh, my brother," said Cleone, "we have awakened from a dream of misery, and a life of grateful praise shall be devoted to our God."

"Mark yet again, my Cleone," said the young Roman, "a few short years since, amidst the courtly halls of Nero, moved a female, whose transcendant beauty, and surpassing loveliness gave her an irresistible influence over the heart of the capricious Emperor, and her sway was undisputed, for it was gentle and unassuming, and, even malice found no room for censure. Ere the love of change, caprice, or estranged affection had doomed her to disgrace, or perhaps, a worse fate, guided by a mysterious Prov-

idence, her heart was subdued by the power of truth. She became a Christian, and disdained to be longer a slave to the imperious will of the tyrant. The marble floors no longer echoed her light footstep, the places that had known her, knew her no more, and the bright, the admired and queenly Valeria was lost to the infamous courts of Nero. But, in the lowly homes of the poor, by the couch of the sick and dying, the abode of the sorrowful and despairing, a sweet and ministering spirit, teaches content to the humble, soothes the distress, and points with a blissful hope to a happy home in heaven."

As he ceased speaking their mother approached, followed by an attendant, wearing the badge of the Flavian family.

"A messenger from your friend, my son." "Health and long life, from my lord Flavius," said he. "He commends him to the noble Curtius, and his honored family, the duties of his post, near the Emperor, prevents his personal presence at this time, but he craves permission to join them in celebrating the obsequies of their noble kinsman."

"Return our most hearty thanks," said Curtius, "we will await his presence." "On my way hither," said the messenger, "I encountered the aged Crispus, who sought thy presence, noble Curtius, hearing the last request of Sagana, the Thessalian Sybil, who is even now dead, that she might lay by the side of her parent, in her last resting place. The weary old man had gained the foot of the hills, and rested awhile, ere he commenced the ascent. There I overtook him, and offered to relieve him of his task. He has now returned to watch the body, which lies under the Arch, near the Preatorium, until thy further orders."

"She has then gone to her rest," said the matron. "The thread upon which hung her protracted life has been severed by the exciting scenes of the past night. May the peace which has so lately dawned upon her soul rest and abide there! Let her last wish, my Curtius, be fulfilled, and, glory to the God of mercy, who has not suffered her sun to set in the dark cloud of Pagan superstition."

Soft music from within stole upon the air, and sweet voices sang:

Warrior! rest; thy toil is o'er,
The trumpet's sound calls thee no more,
The Eagle Standard floats on high,
But closed is its defender's eye.

Strewn flowers above the honored dead,
Shed fragrance o'er his hallowed bed;
Let the unfading Amaranth twine
With Cypress and the Eglantine.

Glory to Him, whose home of love
Waits to receive his soul above!
Glory to Him, whose mighty power
Supports the Christian's dying hour!

Christian! now thy warfare ends;
Thy God his gracious love extends;
Through Him the victory is won;
The triumph gained, the conflict done.

The reign of the depraved and barbarous persecutor of the Christians had closed with the succession of Servius Galba, a new era had dawned upon their fortunes; and, although the "blood of the Martyrs" had proved "as seed to the Church," yet the season of peace and quiet, which now ensued served to foster and ripen the Christian graces, which, in those days of cruelty and inhuman bigotry acquired a stern and almost gloomy character. The mild and beautiful religion of our Saviour, when allowed its free course, in the sweet scenes of domestic life, shone with a more benignant lustre, and its votaries, no longer shuddering with the terror incident to human nature, at the consequences of avowing their faith, fearlessly taught and practised its heaven-born precepts.

The virtues of the noble family whose fortunes we have been following, were expanded beneath the rays of the sun of prosperity, and, for ages, some of the most undaunted defenders of the Christian faith were ranked among its descendants. Connected with illustrious and powerful houses, they were no longer exposed to persecution themselves, and, were enabled, by their influence, not only to promote the rapidly progressing cause of Christianity, but to save many of its disciples from suffering in the days of trial, which ensued in some of the subsequent reigns.

We have now closed our tale of the early Christians," said Herbert, "and, tho' it is a simple story, and pretends to no romance or mystery, yet it is not destitute of a moral." "Very far from it," said Mrs. Wilson, "who can read the short, but well authenticated account of the death of Nero, and contrast it with that of the aged Christian, or even with the last moments of the erring but misguided Sybil, without saying, "Let my death be that of the righteous.' "

"Well, my little brother," said Herbert, addressing Charles, "you have very kindly abstained from criticisms during the course of our reading. Now tell us if you have discovered any discrepancies, through the narrative, as you are now, no doubt, by

your acquaintance with Roman history, able to discover." "You are laughing at me, Herbert, but I will tell you one error. It was not Nero, I believe, who compelled the Senate to sanction the election of his horse to the consulship, but Heliogabas." "I think you are right," said Herbert. "He was, however, a kindred spirit; and now, we will compare notes upon our improvement this winter; beginning with you, Charles, of whose progress I can, in some measure report, being your instructor." "And, besides my regular lessons," said Charles, "I have read more than half through Rollins Ancient History aloud to Susan." "And," said Susan, "besides listening to Charles, while I sewed, I have reviewed the History of England, and read Cowper's Task, not to mention reading the newspaper, etc., etc., and all this in addition to my Latin lesson with Herbert." "Please do explain those et ceteras, my pretty cousin." "Not I," she replied, "I cannot burden my memory with any more of my multifarious occupations." "You have forgotten that we have read the Pilgrim's Progress again." "Ah! true," said Susan, "and the life of the good old dreamer; now, for as good an account of your winter studies, my dear sister and cousin; but I am inclined to believe you will be deficient unless you dignify with the name of study the art of making bread, puddings, and pies, etc." "One of the most useful studies, Susan," said Herbert, "only not leave the rest undone." "Do not imagine we have become mere household automatons," said Elizabeth. "In addition to a tolerable stock of the knowledge to which Susan refers, we have read Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire and Hunter's Sacred Biography, besides reaping some benefit from Charles' reading." "And I have initiated Elizabeth into my little stock of French," said Mary, "but, Herbert, we shall not allow you to be sole catechist; we shall require an account of the manner in which you have spent your solitary hours, which, I am sure, have not been few." "Must I make full confession," said he. "Full and free, without prevarication or equivocation." "Seriously, then, dear Mary, it requires no little labor to retain my position in my class, the other members of which are now pacing the halls of old Harvard, in addition to those pleasant employments enjoyed in common with the rest of you." "Setting apart a little time," said Susan, laughing merrily, "devoted to the Muses. Ah! Herbert, I have made the discovery, partly by my own sagacity, and partly by the tell-tale expression of Aunt Wilson's countenance, that you are the author of much of the poetry which has entertained us this winter." "'Twas but the amusement of a passing hour, dear Susan, and if it has been a source of interest to you, an important end is attained." "And you must continue

that interest, my son," said Mrs. Wilson, "if it will not interfere with other duties. I think," added she, addressing Mary and Susan, that your parents will approve your winter employment, and that in after time you will review them without regret." "That I am sure we shall," said Mary.

Chapter XIII

They had borne all unmoved; disease and death,
The pangs of famine, hard and weary toil;
That, to their sons, they might bequeath a land,
The home of liberty. Shall those sons now
Barter the rich inheritance?

Some days had passed after the conversation which closed the last chapter. A cold stormy evening found our little family without visitors and prepared, as they drew around the table, which displayed a goodly collection of needlework, etc., to listen to Herbert as he read from a manuscript provided by Mrs. Wilson for the entertainment of the evening.

Years have passed away and the events of the War of the American Revolution are mingling with the obscurity of the past, the glorious achievement of our liberty has opened a new era in our history, "old things are done away," but the imagination delights to linger around the scenes of what seems now "olden times"; scenes of peril and distress, but, over whose remembrance a deep interest, a magical charm, is thrown by the knowledge that our kindred and friends bore important parts in the drama, and that the closing act was the freedom of our country. Many were the events of deep and thrilling interest which are now buried in oblivion, or known only to those immediately concerned. The reminiscences which are the subject of these remarks may be wanting in that intense interest, but as being a delineation of the times, of their manners and feelings, and true, in all their main incidents, they may claim some share of attention. It was towards the latter part of May, 1775, but a short time before the memorable battle of Bunker Hill, that a horseman, wearied and worn with travel, exposed to the rays of the burning sun, on a day of uncommon heat for the season, and whose horse seemed sinking with fatigue, turned into a shady lane, leading from the more public road to a small cluster of buildings, in the comparatively thinly settled town of Malden, about four miles from Boston. As he entered the pleasant shade, formed by the apple trees which skirted the road, he permitted the tired animal to slacken its pace, first casting an anxious and inquiring glance about him. Apparently seeing no immediate cause for fear, he continued to ride slowly; removed his hat, and wiping his warm and dusty

brow, appeared to breath more freely. His dress was that of a gentleman, and his countenance, though pale and disturbed, was intelligent and open. After pursuing this pace for about half a mile, the cool and pleasant sound of running water directed his attention to a watering place, at the side of the road, and the renewed spirit of the steed, and his evident wish to taste the luxury, induced his master to dismount, and lead him to the fountain. At this moment a small dog springing up, and barking vehemently, he perceived a woman seated upon a bank near. He started, for his looks and manner had indicated that he sought concealment, and, aiming a blow at the waspish little animal, was preparing to remount his horse. "Come back, Faith," said the woman, sharply, then, as the dog slunk back to her feet, she continued, in an apologetic tone: "He can't do much harm, sir; he has seen his best days; only he might frighten the beast, though, to be sure, he looks too tired to mind a trifle." "Do you live in this neighborhood?" said the traveler, permitting his horse to graze the green herbage around the watering place. "Just over the edge of yonder hill," said she, "but it's something of a walk, and I've nobody now to do my errands since John has gone." "Do you know Capt. B.'s family? Is he at home?" "Know the family! That's what I do; at home? No; bless your heart, no; at home! indeed, you'll find no able-bodied men at home now, more especially the Captain. Where is he? Did you say? That's what I don't know. Sent on some service or other; left every thing, sir, family, land, cattle, and all at loose ends, for the sake of his country; for the matter of that, old Sam Lynde, who has lost one leg, and is nearly seventy, is the only man left behind; and he would be glad to go; I can tell you. The country is all in arms, sir, it's as much as ever the reg'lars over in Boston can get any food to eat, or wood to burn." Without waiting to hear more the questioner turned his horse. "Well," said she, in a low soliloquy, as he rode away, "I shouldn't wonder if he was a Tory, for his face didn't brighten a bit when I told him how alive and stirring our people were; I'll warrant Faithful mistrusted him, or he wouldn't have been so spiteful." So saying she rose, and passing through a stile, into a path which led through a meadow, bent her course in the direction she had indicated as her home.

Meanwhile, the rider had pursued his way; as he passed he regarded the objects around him with much interest and, when he arrived at a spring of water at the side of the road, about a mile from the last stopping place, he rested his horse upon the little stone bridge which crossed the stream proceeding from the spring. Gazing earnestly upon the pleasant spot, overshadowed by tall trees, a train of sad, not unpleasant, reflections passed

through his mind. Who, that after long years of absence, has revisited the spot where his infancy and childhood had passed in the bosom of affection, but can sympathize with such reflections? The well remembered perfume of the mint and sweet herbs which grew around the never-failing spring in rich profusion revived in his memory the playful hours of youth; he could, in imagination, see the never-to-be-forgotten form of his mother, as she came down the avenue which led to the house, to watch the sports of her children, could retrace the pleasant smile and beaming glance of her eye as she witnessed their little feats of skill and strength, and hear her kindly voice warn them of danger; and a mild but grave face of his father, as he would sometimes join them, and, leaning over the balustrade of the little bridge, would address to them some remark of affectionate interest, was present to his mind, as if but a day had intervened. Where were now those kind guardians, where the happy group which had then mingled in sweet communion? The grave had closed over the first, and time, absence and civil dissention had separated the last. As these thoughts saddened his heart, tears filled his eyes, but the heavy roll of cannon from some ship in the harbor aroused him from his reverie and, turning from the spot which had awakened these memories, he passed up the avenue we have referred to, to the mansion of his birth, and now the residence of the family of his brother. All was quiet around, except, at intervals, the merry laugh or gleeful shout of childish mirth echoed from the green lawn, where he saw three little beings pursuing their happy sport. "The children of my brother," he thought, but they were too far for him to distinguish them particularly. Alighting and approaching the door, he saw an elderly female seated and engaged in knitting. As he drew near she looked up, and, after scanning his countenance attentively a few moments, she rose hastily, dropped her work, and ejaculated: "Mercy upon me, Mr. Nathaniel! Is it you?" "It is indeed myself, Prudy; how has it happened that, after so many years, you have not forgotten me?" "There is not one of your family I shall forget while I have reason," said she, "but the news reached us that you had sailed for England and I never thought to see you again." "I am now on my way to Boston, to embark in the first vessel that leaves the harbor for the home of my ancestors, but I am escaping from enemies, my good Prudy, enemies to me and, as I believe, to their lawful king. Will you afford refreshment to one whom you no doubt believe to be a traitor to his country?" "You should not talk so, Mr. Nathaniel; you are in your brother's house, though, may be, if he were here, he would look upon you with a frowning brow; yet his wife will not, I am sure, and I

will but let her know you are here before I take care of you and your horse." She then led the way into the house and, showing him into an apartment, she left him alone. How well remembered was the prospect from those windows! The pleasant green that sloped from the house, the old pear trees at the foot of the declivity, while, in the distance, but directly opposite, lay the town of Boston, with its tall spires, and the harbor, with its masts. There was the clump of walnut trees where he had gathered nuts and, near by, the old apple tree which had obtained the name of "mother's tree," because it bore an apple which was her favorite fruit, and even as he gazed, the old bell of Brattle Street Church, with its deep tone, struck its well remembered chime. There is something in the breath of spring that especially revives the memory of the past and it was with many a sweet and sad recollection that the wanderer lingered near the window and turned reluctantly at the opening of the door. The wife of his brother greeted him with affectionate kindness and her sympathy and soothing words cheered his heart. In answer to her wish that he could stay with them, could enter into the feelings of his countrymen and aid them in their exertions for freedom from unjust exactions, he said: "It is in vain, dear Hester, to think of it; though I may feel as you do, that our king has been misled by evil counsellors; that he has imposed harsh restrictions upon these colonies, and, by these means, alienated the affections of the people, still, in my opinion, my allegiance is due to him and to him it must be paid. Other influences have contributed to strengthen my early attachment to the English government; since I last saw you I have been betrothed to the daughter of a British officer, most amiable and beloved, and have had my hopes and anticipations blasted by her death. Her country must still be mine; but I have been almost a martyr to my loyalty, for I have been seized as a Tory, accused, though most unjustly, of transmitting intelligence to the royal army, immured in close confinement, and, though not harshly treated, yet debarred from communication with my friends. The hours spent in such solitude were dreary enough, uncheered by sympathy or affection, though not abandoned by hope, for I still trusted in the exertions of those who, I was confident, would use their utmost endeavors for my release. I was not mistaken in my expectations, for two days ago, as I paced my gloomy apartment in solitary musing, the door was unlocked and a person entered who had a few times officiated as my jailor. He performed some trifling offices and, as he retired, left the door ajar, casting, as I thought, a significant glance at me. I followed at some distance, but, losing sight of him at the foot of the stairs, I passed

out at the door; and, seeing a horse, prepared for a journey, fastened to the railing, I mounted without any hesitation, concluding, I have no doubt rightly, that the means of escape were thus provided by friends. I have scarcely allowed myself rest or refreshment, being fearful of pursuit, and, by changing horses, I have at last arrived so near the place of my destination, which is Boston, from whence, as soon as possible, I shall embark for England; for I can not join against my countrymen in this contest. You will sympathize with me in this resolution, my dear sister?" "Yes," said she, "but you are exhausted and must stay here until you are refreshed." "No," he said, "if I can elude the Argus vigilance of your excited populace I shall be in Boston tonight and, besides, I must not subject your good husband to the mortification of knowing that his Tory brother has obtained an asylum under his roof. I know too well his uncompromising zeal in behalf of the colonies and his determined animosity to those whom he considers their enemies." Prudy now entered and placed upon the table the refreshments she had prepared, with many excuses for what she termed the homely fare; but the fine fish, the fresh, though coarse, bread, and sweet butter needed no apology and were duly appreciated by the way-worn traveler. To renew what she called his exhausted spirits she had prepared what was, at that time, a luxury, a cup of tea, and, as he inhaled the perfume so grateful to the wearied frame, he smiled at the good woman and said: "How is this, Prudy, are you not too much of a patriot to use this prohibited beverage, and in the house, too, of one of the most determined rebels against his king?" The color mounted in the cheeks of the faithful domestic as she prepared to make an energetic defence, but her mistress replied, with a ready smile: "Nay, brother, you must not quarrel with your physician, or the medicine, though it be contraband. Your brother, being far away, is not responsible for the misdemeanors of the two lonely inhabitants of his deserted home. And, truly, this cheering herb is now only used as a medicine. We join heart and hand, however, with our brave countrymen in deprecating the tyrannical laws which have deprived us of many comforts, besides, this more especially," she said, and the tears glittered in her eyes, "of the society of those nearest and dearest to our hearts." "God grant, dear Hester, that this most unnatural war may soon cease, for, if continued, misery and extermination will be the fate of these flourishing colonies." "We hope for better things, brother, the united exertions of so many true and noble hearts as are scattered through the country, with the help of God, in a just cause, will effect miracles." Three beautiful little girls now appeared at the door and, being told by their mother to ap-

proach, received the caresses of their uncle. The eldest was a bright and beautiful child of nine years, full of life and animation; the second a mild, sedate and quiet little creature of five, and the youngest a fair, rosy and plump little one of two, whose every step was a bound and whose joyous laugh exhilarated the listener. "You are happy, Hester, in this little group; they are very lovely and health and light-hearted pleasure is expressed in every motion." The praise of these objects of her affection brought a bright glow of satisfaction to her cheeks. "Ah," said she, "if their father was but with us; while danger and death surround him we can not be happy." The tears that again filled her eyes at this recollection dimmed the flush of affection and Prudy, who was most devotedly attached to her, said, with some indignation: "Shame upon the tyrant who has cast such a shadow over our happy homes! I must say what I think, Mr. Nathaniel, if he is your king. What business had he to interfere with our rights, and to impose taxes upon us to support his unjust wars and wicked extravagance?" He has had bad advisers, Prudy, and the time will come when he will be advised of this." "Too late for his good," said she. "Our people would not have known their strength, perhaps, but when they once find it out they will no longer live subjects to England." "Perhaps you are right," said he, "and when these cruel difficulties are all settled, my good friend, we will yet hope to meet and discuss these questions amicably. I must now leave you, my kind sister, with my prayer that the blessing of Heaven may rest upon you and your dear family; and you, Prudy, you, who watched over my youth, and was ever kind and affectionate to the wayward boy"—his voice faltered—"if I never meet you again on earth, may we meet in Heaven!" The good woman now sobbed aloud as he shook her hand, and no less affectionate was the farewell upon the part of the mother and her little family. "You will let us hear of your safety, dear brother, before you leave the country?" "If I possibly can; I am not, however, without serious fears of being apprehended this side of Boston." At this moment an energetic but cracked voice was heard, singing the chorus to one of the patriotic songs of the day:

"So, one and all, my merry boys,
Be up, and bravely doing;
We'll drive the British o'er the seas,
And fairly prove their ruin."

"There," said Prudy, hastily wiping her eyes; "there's old Sam Lynde, going with the market cart, over to Charlestown;

now, if we could but make him think you were sent by your brother, he never would suspect you to be a Tory, and then you might go safely." She went out in haste and they soon heard her voice at the door conferring with the old man: "People are so suspicious now, you know, Sam," said she, "that he might be stopped and hindered, when it is of so much importance that he should be there by sundown." "I'll see to it; I'll see to it," said he, as he adjusted his basket, and mounted the vehicle with difficulty. "Well, wait a minute," said she, and, returning, she told them, what they had already gathered, that it would be expedient for him to proceed immediately under the auspices of the old gardener. With a most affectionate but sad adieu they parted, fearing what proved but too true, that they should never meet again on earth. This was but one of the many parting scenes of that eventful period; that season of civil war, for it truly deserved that name, though three thousand miles of wide ocean lay between the contending nations. Families were divided, father against son and brother against brother; kindred ties were severed and the heavy cloud of domestic dissension hung over this once peaceful country. But, confident in a just cause, a band of noble spirits joined in a holy league to resist oppression, to rise above the crushing hand of tyrannical power, and force their way to freedom. It was a glorious resolution and gloriously did it triumph.

The soft breeze of evening, laden with the sweets of spring, stole over the fading landscape, the light tinkle of some solitary cow-bell and the shrill and monotonous notes of the frogs alone breaking the stillness immediately around the anxious listeners who were awaiting the return of the old market man, which, they hoped, would relieve their suspense as to the safety of the fugitive. But, notwithstanding the calm repose of this scene was undisturbed, the busy sounds of life were heard in the distance, for, though the road to Boston by the highway was four miles, yet the distance across the marshes, which lay opposite the house, was but little over a mile, and the roll of the drum, with other martial sounds, was distinctly heard. Sad and depressing the thought that weighed upon the mind of the mistress of the mansion; her little ones were at rest and all was quiet around, but how long would it remain so? Her husband was far away, the time of his return uncertain, if, indeed, he would ever again return. The enemy were becoming more and more incensed at the insults and aggressions of the colonists, who, in their turn, were burning with indignation at the tyranny of the regular troops, as they were called, and each day produced some new cause of hatred and defiance on both sides. Scarcely a ray of hope lighted

the deep gloom of the future and, though striving to resign herself and her all into the hands of Almighty Love, her heart throbbed with anxious fears. The good Prudy sat near, plying her knitting needles, which, in those days of simplicity, before the inventions of modern times rendered their use obsolete, or, at least unfashionable, were indispensable accompaniments of the female; and, with the earnest freedom and interest which her long residence in the family warranted, endeavored to wile away the melancholy which shaded the brow of her mistress. "It seems but a few days," said she, "since they were all children and I, though not quite so young, as blithe and happy, for never had a poor orphan ever found a happier home than I had. I was treated as one of the family and as long as I live I shall cleave to it. The sight of Mr. Nathaniel has brought old times to my mind and I can not abide the thought that the son of his father is a Tory, but he never had the firm judgment of his brother. Trust in the Lord, my mistress, and all will be right, let what may happen. It is a great lesson to learn but, once learned, it serves us all the rest of our lives. I much wonder old Sam is so long coming; he is not gone, usually, more than two hours." "He is old and infirm, Prudy, and we need not wonder if we do not see him before morning; but we will watch some time longer." And, changing the conversation, they conferred upon their household affairs and domestic matters in which the kind handmaid took an affecionate interest. Another hour passed and, becoming convinced that something had occurred to prevent the return of the old man, they retired to rest.

"Would it have been better, mother," said Elizabeth, "if the colonies had been contented to remain under the English government? When I hear of these sad times of war, I am almost tempted to wish they had continued in quiet subjection." "The exactions and encroachments of the parent country," said Mrs. Wilson, "were too flagrant; the colonists would have dishonored their ancestors had they borne unmoved the tyranny of the English ministry, but it was long before they could divest themselves of the feeling of dependence upon England, the home of their fathers, and break the tie which had bound them to their laws and institutions. They submitted to many petty abuses and extortions, they petitioned and remonstrated for the redress of more palpable ones, and it was not until a series of gross insults and unpardonable neglect of every appeal to the justice of the king and his ministers had aroused the indignation of the people of these States to a pitch that could not be controlled that they had recourse to arms as a last resort."

"And the result showed," said Herbert, "that the God of justice was upon their side, and fought their battles, for, surely, there was never a more apparently hopeless cause than that of the united colonies, against their powerful oppressor."

"Here is a young hero," said Susan, turning to Charles, "who would have joined heart and hand with his countrymen. I wish you had marked how he winced at your unpatriotic question, Elizabeth."

"Notwithstanding which question," said Herbert, "I am very sure if our gentle sister had lived in those days she would have assisted energetically in melting the weights of the old clock for bullets, or any other measure deemed necessary by the fair enthusiasts of those trying times."

"I am very sure, dear brother, however much I might deprecate the war, and its train of evils, the comforts of those dear to me would have been uppermost in my thoughts." After cheerful conversation, they separated for the night.

Chapter XIV

A charm lingers over the tales of the past,
The grey mist of time o'er their beauty is cast;
Its thin texture heightens the power of the spell,
And the mystic enchantment we would not dispel.

A mild and pleasant morning tempted the young party to a walk, which was rendered more delightful by anecdotes related by Herbert relative to the first settlement of the place, with which he had become familiar from his intercourse with some of the aged people of the town, and which caused many a laugh from their quaint simplicity. He pointed out to them the site of the first building erected for public worship, for the earliest object with our pious ancestors was to provide a suitable place in which to bow together before the God who had guided them over the wide waters to this pleasant home; and the bell, which even at this time summoned the inhabitants to their devotions, was the same which was sent by kind friends from England for the service and ornament of the original sanctuary. It was a spot, retired from the village, upon the sea-shore, and, though the sacred building had long since been removed, there was a quiet loneliness about it, which seemed suited to the purpose to which it had been dedicated. "When we return home," said Herbert, "I will read you some lines founded upon an anecdote connected with the old church which formerly occupied this situation; the moss-grown tombstone, covered with so many ancient inscriptions, which you remember, Elizabeth, we have so often endeavored to decipher, covers the remains of the good minister, who figures as one of the characters, but I cannot hope to inspire you with the same interest which I felt, when in my twelfth year, I first listened to the story from the lips of a good old dame, who is no longer among the living." At the appointed time, after their return home, he read the following lines; which they decided should be called

A Tradition of the Year 1650

Time was, when tyrant power in Britain's Isle
Ruled with despotic sway; when pious men
Were hunted like wild beasts if they should dare
To worship God in their own way; the way
Which they believed, in pure simplicity

To be acceptable to Him, whose eye
All seeing and all knowing, looks alone
At the intent and purpose of the heart.
With firm resolve they left their native land,
Their home, their own green fields, and shady lawns,
And o'er the pathless ocean took their course
To the wild shores of a far distant clime;
There, no proud king or haughty priest has power,
To mar their quiet peace and pious prayers.
Now, happy homes and fertile fields arose
On those far shores, and pointing to the heavens
The tall church spire reflected the bright sun;
The sons of God had gathered here, but, as
It was, in ancient time, when Satan came
Amidst their councils, and, with wily art
Laid schemes to tempt the holy man to sin,
So now, among the pious race, crept in
Some bad designing ones, whose cunning aim
Was to seduce the good and pious heart;
Or, failing this, to turn his holy zeal
To ridicule; to watch for some weak spot;
For, who, in this imperfect world of ours
Is free from imperfection; and, when found
With jeering mockery, to cause him shame,
In a small village dwelt a good old man
Beloved and honored for his kindly heart;
Zealous in prayer, in duty prompt and true;
With guileless life, and firm and holy faith,
The peaceful tenour of his life passed on;
The Sexton of the parish, his white hairs
Were reverenced by the simple pious flock,
To whom his services were duly paid,
Save by some graceless ones, who long had made
The kind old man the butt of many a joke;
But, as we often mark, the wicked jest
Would harmlessly rebound from its rude aim
And wound the miscreant who had sped the bolt.
'Twas on a windy, dark and stormy night
That the old sexton rose from his warm hearth
To brave the old and dreary autumn rain;
For, on each night, at nine, the old church bell
Was rung, with the intent that all should then
Go to their quiet rest; that peaceful sleep
Might be the portion of each weary frame
Till morn should rouse them to their daily toil.

Those were the days when superstition's power
Was felt by all; none from its gloomy chains
Were free; the grave divine and the wise sage
Alike confessed its sway, its potent rule;
And, if dark fears of unknown ill had power
To shake the nerves of learned ministers,
We need not wonder if our worthy friend
Was not exempt from this besetting ill.
It was a night, he thought, when wicked fiends
Would triumph in the mischief they might cause;
And, though his faith in the Almighty power
To guard his steps, was all unshaken still,
Yet dismal fears and dark foreboding thought,
Would rush, unbidden, thro' his beating heart.
The kind old dame shared in his fears of ill,
And, as with care, she wrapped about his neck
The warm and woolly comforter, with words
Of warning kind, she urged his quick return.
He sallied forth, and onward bent his way
To the lone church, which stood so near the shore
That the rude waves on such a night as this
Would almost dash their spray upon its side;
The wild wind roared amongst the woods, and seemed
Contending with the loud and deafening surge,
While the pale rays, which from his lantern gleamed
But served to show the black and muddy pools
That filled the road. Onward the good man strode,
And the same courage, summoned to his aid
Would have been lauded in the warrior bold.
Slowly the ponderous key turned in the bolt;
Through the broad aisle, he moved, with cautious tread,
Starting at the dull echo of his steps.
But, as he raised the light to seize the rope,
Its beams shone full upon the sacred desk;
What fearful sight appalled his shuddering gaze!
A Gorgon's head usurped the holy place,
Which, to his terror-stricken mind appeared
The embodied form of Lucifer himself!
He stopped not to encounter the foul fiend,
But, rushing forth, stayed not his course, until
Safe landed at the reverened pastor's door.
Great was the wonder, strong was the dismay
With which the pious man heard the dark tale;
But, with the conscious rectitude of truth,
He seized the Holy Book, with firm resolve

That the foul spirit should no longer hold
Usurped dominion o'er that hallowed spot.
Torrents of rain descending, seemed to warn
The zealous pair from the encounter rash,
Still, strong in faithful confidence, they gained
The fatal spot, when, with his talisman
Uplifted, uttering words of mighty power,
The pious pastor, with firm step and slow
Approached the dreaded form, though, strange to tell,
The wicked Tempter seemed to stand his ground,
Nearer and nearer they advance, and then
Ascend the stairs, armed for the conflict dire.
But, now, the shameless mockery unveiled
Shows but the head and horns of an old sheep,
A moment's pause, and, then a pleasant smile
Illum'ed the good man's face, as he addressed
The indignant sexton in a kindly tone.
"We have been weakly credulous, my friend,
"Our foolish fears have stolen our better sense,
" 'Tis the vile trick of some rude infidel;
"But, we will turn his bad intent to good,
"And learn a lesson from this seeming ill.
"Henceforth, we will not suffer coward fear
"To thwart our judgment, or disturb our peace."
So saying, with strong arm, he drew away
The unseemly object; and, with ready hand
The bell was rung by the old servitor;
And as they parted, each to his own home,
With mild and gentle tone, the pastor said,
"Do not forget, my good old friend, tonight,
"Ere you lie down upon your peaceful bed,
"To offer to our God, the prayer of faith,
"That He would turn the erring mind from sin."
The morn arose, and the dark clouds dispersed,
Before the fresh and health inspiring gale,
When the malicious jester made his way
Towards the old church, to mark what the effect
Had been, of his vile mockery; whether
His trick had been discovered, or, unseen
By the old man, the foul caricature
Still occupied the holy preacher's desk.
The beast he rode was vicious as himself,
For, as he turned the angle of the wall
From the highroad, upon the level green,
Scared by some object, which beset his path,

The fiery steed reared high, then plunging down
Threw his unwary master to the ground.
'Twas the grim object, which, with cunning skill,
He had prepared for the good Sexton's harm,
And, which, on that dark night, the pious pair
Had drawn away, and thrown beside the wall.
With many a deep and heavy groan, he lay,
Till guided by the same wise Providence
The kind old man 'gainst whom the plot was laid,
Came to his rescue, and, with kindly care,
Soothed his distress, and brought him timely aid.

"I hope your memory is stored with many of these 'legends of the days of yore,'" said Mary, "and that you will find leisure to arrange them in the same interesting form." "It will be a powerful inducement to attempt it, my dear cousin, if it will interest you."

Chapter XV

On the succeeding evening Herbert proceeded to read to the assembled listeners the continuation of the reminiscences of the times of the American Revolution.

While the heart of many a patriotic American was throbbing with indignation and anxiety, and the countenances of many a mother, wife, daughter or sister was pale with watching and tears, the face of nature was delightful and undisturbed. The soft breezes were rich with the perfume of flowers and shrubs, the verdant fields glittered with the dew, the sweet melody of birds and hum of insects enlivened the scene, while the cattle, with measured steps, were pacing the accustomed path, toward their green pasture. With the early dawn the old marketman had returned, and brought stirring news. The roads, he said, were filled with soldiers, and tents were pitched in every convenient place; they would permit no provisions to be carried into Boston, and had even succeeded in carrying off the cattle which were pastured on the islands in the harbor, so that it was supposed that the British troops were likely to have much difficulty in procuring food. "Our troops are ready and brave enough," said he, "if they be not trained for service, and, what if their muskets be of all sizes and shapes, the main thing is to know how to use them, which, I'll warrant they do." They had proceeded without any interruption, he said, until they had crossed Malden Bridge, when they were stopped by a small party of soldiers, who, after some questions, permitted him to go on, but refused to let the gentleman pass until they received further orders from their commander; that he had waited until they applied to him, who "luckily," said the old man, "proved to be General Knox, and you may be sure that he would see that any friend of Captain B.'s had his rights, so, after some talk apart, he not only allowed him to proceed, but sent a man with him, that he might not be again stopped, and I saw him depart, after he had shaken hands with me, and left this piece of money with me, like a gentleman as he is." He proceeded to say, that as it was late before he concluded his business, he had stopped at the house of an old acquaintance, near the Bridge. Thus relieved of their anxiety, they could now listen with interest, to the details of old Sam. "The regulars will be starved out, by and by," said he, "if they don't get scared to death first. They say that three of their generals, as they were walking down Beacon Hill, the other night, heard strange noises

over their heads, which they supposed to be some kind of airguns, fired at them by the Yankee rebels, as they called them, and took to their heels with such expedition that they nearly fell headlong; but, after all," said he, with an explosion of great glee, "it was only the humming of beetles, and if they run for such imaginations, what will they do when they stand, face to face, with our brave boys? And, there is a plan afoot, which will soon settle the business; it is to erect works on the hill in Charlestown, which overlooks Boston, so that our men can fire in among them." He then proceeded to say that the British would not permit the inhabitants of Boston to leave the town, or hold any communication with their friends; that it was said reinforcements from England were daily expected, and that the Americans were anxious to strike some bold stroke, before their arrival. More than all, he reported, that George Washington, of Virginia, was appointed Commander in Chief of the American Armies, "and a noble commander it is said he will make, being an old soldier, and, that it will not be long before he will be before Boston." The heart of the affectionate mother throbbed with anxiety at these tidings. Situated as they were, in the very seat of contention, what would be the result if the enemy were victorious, and succeeded in dispersing her countrymen, and what would become of her, and her helpless little family? Anticipating such an emergency, her husband, in his last letter, had directed her to leave their home, and, with her little girls, retire to her native place, which was about forty miles in the interior, there to await his return, or the indications of Providence. With a heavy heart, after taking the advice of the good Prudy, who, with disinterested affection, offered to stay at the mansion as long as it was safe, she determined that the crisis which her husband had foreseen, had now arrived, and that she would follow his directions. "If," said her faithful domestic, "it comes to the worst, Sam and I can shut up the house, turn out the cattle, and retire over the hill to his sister's, where we shall be safe, but, it would not do for you, with these little ones, to run such a risk. You can now go with safety in the old chaise; which is roomy enough to hold considerable, and, you will not be afraid to drive the horse, who, tho' not swift, is sure."

Having come to this resolution, no time was to be lost, and they immediately commenced preparations for the journey.

The morning arrived when she must bid farewell to the scene of so much peace and quiet domestic joy, perhaps never again to see it, for she could not conceal from herself that fire and sword were the accompaniments of modern warfare; but her children, delighted at the journey, would not suffer a shade to linger upon her brow, and Prudy, amidst smiles and tears, uttered her affec-

tionate adieu, echoed by Sam. The day was beautiful, and the wild enthusiasm of her companions prevented her indulgence in melancholy reflections, while the road led them away from the scenes of tumult and confusion, and she trusted they might escape observation. She was not disappointed; night brought them to the home of her youth, where a joyous welcome awaited them, and until better times, a peaceful retreat.

"And now," said Mrs. Wilson, "I must leave my farther tale untold. Perhaps at some future time I may continue it, and I think it will interest you, as the incidents are connected with your family." "I had hoped, mother," said Charles, that you would tell us about Bunker Hill." "I should not be a good historian, my son, in tales of war and bloodshed. Charlestown was burned by the British, as you know, but their devastations stopped there, at that time, and our old mansion was left unharmed and safe, till such time as its owners could return to its peaceful shades." "And did the Tory uncle never return to America?" "He did not; he reached England in safety, but did not live long after that event. I will relate one little circumstance, Charles, which happened at this time. There was a poor widow, who occupied a small house in Charlestown, which was destroyed during the conflagration, and which comprised the whole of her fortune. She had contrived to support herself and two children by her daily exertions, but was now left destitute indeed. With the hope of assistance from some friends, in an adjoining town, she took her departure from the scene of destruction, carrying one child in her arms, while the other, an active little boy of four years, closely followed her footsteps. As he trudged along and employed the little staff with which his mother had provided him, in tracing lines in the road, he struck something which, by its brightness, attracted his attention. Picking it up and delighted with his prize, he soon overtook his mother and showed her a ring, the value of which was evident by its costly diamond, and the initials and cypher upon the inside. The good woman, rather perplexed than pleased with this circumstance, and tired with her walk, sat down with her children upon some timber to deliberate upon what she should do with her acquisition. Two gentlemen, whose dress announced them to be British officers, were walking slowly by, and as they passed, she heard one say, 'It must have been near this spot. It was a last memento, and the loss is to me irreparable.' Thinking it possible this observation might refer to the ring, she immediately addressed them, and related the circumstance of her son's finding it. It was directly identified, and claimed by the officer, who had made the remark which had attracted her attention. He had discovered his loss, and was then retracing his steps,

though almost hopeless of recovering his treasure. He was a nobleman of high rank in the army, and, after a few words of inquiry, she received not only present assistance, but assurance that her son should never want a friend. The promise was faithfully fulfilled, and through the assistance of their kind benefactor, he received an education, which has enabled him to take a high stand in his profession, which was that of a clergyman, and he is now a much respected minister in this vicinity."

Chapter XVI

'Midst the thorns are fragrant roses,
Sunbeams 'midst the shifting clouds.

Many days of open weather now intervened, when winter appeared to meditate resigning his sovereignty. The snow disappeared from the hills which surrounded their pleasant retreat, little sunny nooks were visible where the early violet might shelter, and the sands on the seashore were becoming bright and sparkling. Delightful as were these indications of spring, the inmates of Mrs. Wilson's abode were not inclined to wish for its rapid approach. The winter had not only been pleasantly, but they all felt, profitably, spent, that seed had been sown which might, by careful culture, produce an abundant harvest. The joyous and lively spirits of Susan still retained all their buoyancy and she joined them on the sands where they were watching the white sails of the vessels as they were leaving the harbor, as the sun shone full upon them.

"They are leaving their homes," said Elizabeth, "to cross that ocean, which, though now so serene, we have seen under such different aspects." "And," said Herbert, "they are, no doubt, elated with the pleasant auspices under which they commence their voyage. Sailors are a superstitious race; they dread to leave their port under a lowering sky; and it is almost impossible to induce them to embark on Friday. You will frequently see them on a land-cruise, as they call it, to overhaul the log-book of the redoubtable Moll Pitcher, or some old fortune teller, relative to the success of their voyage, the constancy of their sweethearts, etc., and the wise old lady prognosticates so much to their satisfaction that they return in great glee, after leaving with her a goodly portion of their well-filled purses." "It is surely a kind Providence," said Mary, "which hides from us the events of futurity. How wretched would be every intervening moment were we certain of the time of some great calamity!"

"True, Mary," said Herbert, "and there are many who, without this knowledge, suffer a thousand deaths in fearing one. I refer to those who are ever anticipating evil, who prophesy destroying frost in every cold wind and blight or blasting mildew in the warm sun or refreshing rain." "I am decidedly of the opinion," said Susan, "that such persons are worse in society than drones in a hive, for the idle person generally injures himself

more than any one else, but the discontented one makes others wretched by imparting to them a portion of his bitterness. It gives me the fidgets to hear poor Mrs. Flagg complain of this wicked world, protesting that everybody is governed by selfish motives and, shaking her head, declare that there is no such thing as happiness on earth, and yet she enjoys, or seems to enjoy, to perfection a good cup of tea and a warm cake."

"We are too young, as yet, my cousin," said Herbert, "and have seen too few of the trials of life to controvert, positively, the good woman's assertion, but, when we look around us and see so much beauty, so much to love and admire, we may be sure that our Creator did not place us here to be miserable."

"Now for a race, Charles," said Susan; "I shall be at the gate first."

They met Mrs. Wilson at the door and she greeted them with joyful news; a letter had arrived from their parents. The health of their father had so much improved that he wrote of speedy return and rejoiced in the happiness so apparent in the letters of his children. There was but one shadow to this pleasant news, the breaking up of their winter enjoyments, but Herbert reminded them that at any rate his vacation was nearly at an end; that they could look back upon this Winter in Retirement with almost unalloyed pleasure and forward with the cheering hope of future joyous meetings; also with the certainty that, by the help of Providence, the treasures stored in their minds through this, at first, dreaded season, would prove precious and available in all the varying events of their lives. "We will improve the time yet left us and I will read you this evening some lines written by a lady born in this town."

THE OLD HOME

Speed onward, Time! thy dark wings leave
Deep traces on the path they cleave!
Speed onward! for the goal is near,
Backward I mark thy swift career,
And through the hazy past mine eye
Dwells on the scenes of infancy;
For, bright and clear its visions seem,
And sweet, in Memory's glowing dream,
    The broad Atlantic's waves are bright
    Where first my eyes beheld the light;
    The broad Atlantic's shores are fair
    Where first I breathed my native air;
    They boast of clear Italian skies;

I've seen the glorious sun arise
From out his sparkling ocean-bed,
And, o'er my home, his splendors shed,
His beams illumined the swelling sails
That caught the scented morning gales;
Ne'er were Italian skies more fair
Than rested o'er my old Home there.

Thy rocky cliffs, Nahant, gleamed bright
As morning poured her golden light;
And silvery streams of whiteness broke
From the rough seams of old Egg Rock;
Inland arose, 'midst foliage gay,
The Lover's Leap, with forehead grey;
With haughty front, High Rock would seek
To court the sun's first rising beam,
And sheltered homes, and meadows rare,
Soon caught the glittering radiance there.
The early sunlight never shone
On brighter than my own old Home.

And romance spread her witching dream
O'er shore and wood and rippling stream,
For here, 'twas said, the pirate Kidd
His ill-got store of treasure hid;
Amidst a wild and craggy waste,
Where straggling pines their shadows cast,
A rocky Cavern, dark and deep,
Stretched inward from its opening steep;
And there, 'twas told, foul deeds were wrought,
And gold concealed, by murder bought,
Till, at the Dungeon's gloomy name
The blood in quicker currents came.

Weird Superstition spread her wing
Of sombre shade, o'er dell and spring;
Once, powers of ill seemed leagued, to bind
In clouds of mist, the human mind;
Dread scenes ensued, and but the name
Of Witchcraft roused the smouldering flame,
The whirlwind spent its mightiest force
On Salem's heights, but in its course
Its withering breath defiled the scene
Which else would more like Eden seem,
The haze of long past years alone
Casts shadows o'er my own old Home.

We boast, too, of a Sybil's fame,
Though graced with but a homely name,
But never Sybil had more power,
And Sybil ne'er more honors bore;
No horrid rites she tried to show
A prophet's skill, no charms to know,
No Sybil of old Rome was she
To give the Books of Destiny;
She knew no Book; but could enthrall
With magic skill the minds of all,
And some may live who once have known
The Sybil of my own old Home.

Here patriot hearts and patriot hands
Were joined to break Oppression's bands;
Our pleasant homes sent forth their best
To fight, at Freedom's high behest;
We claim the Puritan's high birth;
Our fathers left their native hearth,
Their sons on Freedom's land to rear,
Who, tyrant despots need not fear;
Where they might truly worship God
Without a Bishop's mitred rod;
And tyrant power has ne'er been known
To hover round my own old Home.

Speed onward, Time! while life remains
And Memory her power retains,
My own old Home! I'll cherish thee
Amidst the dreams of infancy;
The mists of age may gather round;
The silver cord may be unbound;
Speed onward, Time! for death alone
Can dim the thought of my old Home.

"Though the local scenery of Lynn," said Mrs. Wilson, "is not essentially changed since this was written, many of its manners and customs are. The good old Puritan days have somewhat gone by; but it is pleasant to read something which refers to the time when they were reverenced and appreciated."

Chapter XVII

Peaceful and calm as Sabbath's holy eve.

On the ensuing Sabbath evening the conversation turned upon the public services of the day, which were rendered interesting to Charles, as well as the others, by their reference to the ancient history of Palestine. "There is now left," said Herbert, "but the dust and ruins of these celebrated countries of antiquity. Were it not for these, even yet, splendid mementoes of the former greatness of ancient Syria, we should be lost in wonder and credulity when we contrast the history of its past grandeur with the accounts of modern travelers. How puny do the works of our days of boasted superiority appear, compared with the colossal ruins of Balbec and Palmyra, where the stones of which their mighty edifices were composed would seem to require the strength of giants, or such machinery as the mechanism of these times can hardly imagine, to place them in their appointed situation. The plains of Syria, from the earliest records of time, have been the theatre on which the most interesting scenes have been performed. Embattled legions have here fought to the death, and the footsteps of the messengers of peace on earth, preceded by those of their Divine Master, have pressed the favored soil. Here, too, the wild fanaticism of the Crusades rose to its climax, here the brave, but imprudent and improvident Richard of England, and the generous, noble-hearted Saladin figured in their brief careers. These scenes possess an indescribable charm for the Christian, while they present inexhaustible themes for poetry and romance." "Your enthusiasm, dear Herbert," said Elizabeth, "would lead us to suppose that you, too, had taken them for a theme; do not deny us the pleasure of profiting by the inspiration." "I will not," said he, "though I have only attempted a paraphrase of an incident related in the Scriptures."

'Twas noon; on Syria's sandy plains
The scorching sun pours down his beams;
Where shall the weary traveler rest?
Where shall he slake his burning thirst?
Far in the hazy distance seen,
Rises a grove of palm trees green,
And, to the near approach displays
To the enraptured wanderer's gaze

A sweet retreat, whose verdure bright
And fountains cool and shaded light
Would seem to promise that no care
Or sorrowing heart could linger there.
Vain thought! for earth contains no spot
Where sin or sorrow enters not.
Mistaken dream! a heaven of bliss
Alone bestows a gift like this.
Amidst these shades a palace rose;
A proud and stately front it shows;
Around, 'tis graced with gardens fair,
Delightful perfumes fill the air;
Sweet music cheers the passing day,
Delicious waters cast their spray;
And, when the soft and gentle breeze
Of peaceful twilight stirs the trees,
The bird of night, with plaintive strains
Soothes to repose and pleasant dreams.
But in this spot, so calm and sweet,
There dwelt sad hearts and sorrows deep;
The Syrian Captain there abode,
Naaman, favorite of his lord;
Riches surround the mighty Chief;
Do they avert a dreaded grief?
Slaves bow before his slightest word,
And splendor decks his plenteous board;
Ah! sad relief for anxious care.
Ah! poor resort against despair.
With saddened brow the warrior stalks
Through stately halls and sheltered walks,
The leper's curse is on him fixed;
With his best blood the plague is mixed,
And fleeting Time, he knows, full sure,
Will bring fresh misery to endure.
No hope for him; each rising morn
Still sees his heart with anguish torn,
While each returning hour for sleep
But marks his hour for torture deep.
Still, one there is to share his grief
If sympathy could bring relief;
Behind those latticed windows dwells
A form whose heart with sorrow swells;
The wife; whose best affections twine
Around his love; as twines the vine
Round some supporting prop or power

That shields it in the dangerous hour.
Oh! not for them the trusting prayer,
That sure resource against despair;
Thine idol gods are powerless now,
In vain to them, the knee they bow.
But, as the pious man of old
Obtained, by intercession bold,
A promise, that, if ten were found
Within the fated city's bound,
Who worshiped God with zeal and truth,
They should avert the dreaded wrath.
So, now, the faith of one restored
To health and strength the Syrian Lord,
Amidst the slaves, a Hebrew maid,
Obedience to her mistress paid,
And, sympathizing with her woe,
Sought means to save the dreaded blow;
A holy prophet dwelt, she told,
Where rose Samaria's turrets bold;
That God, to him, had given the power
This fatal leprosy to cure.

Beneath an Olive's spreading shade,
The holy prophet knelt and prayed;
The leper, with his pompous train,
Assistance asks, nor asks in vain;
"Go wash in Jordan's sacred stream,"
The prophet said, "Wash and be clean."
With proud disdain, the Syrian turned;
Such simple means his nature spurned;
Some mighty deed, he proudly thought,
Was needful, when his cure was wrought,
"Are not our Syrian streams," he said,
"Better than Jordan's vaunted tide?
"Is not Arbana's silver wave,
"Or Pharphar's flood, fit place to lave?"
But, yielding to affection's prayer
The haughty leper sought the shore;
Where Jordan's swelling waters flowed,
And bathed him in the healing flood;
Then, rising from the holy stream,
No loathsome leprosy is seen;
No tainted blood his system knows,
But, pure the healthful current flows;
No sickly scales his flesh deform,

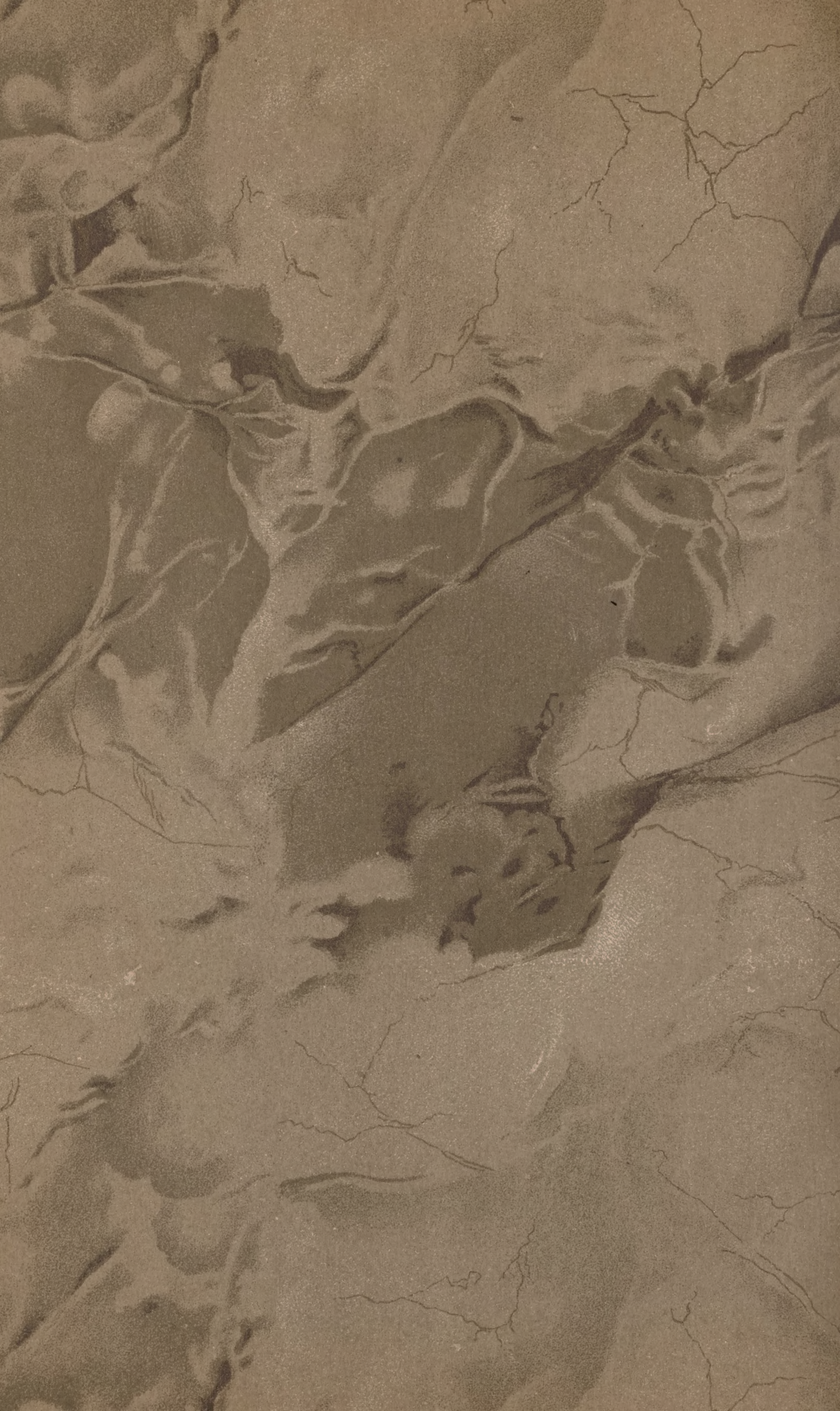
Like the fair child's, now soft and warm,
With joyful heart, and thankful praise
To Israel's God, he lifts his eyes;
"There is no God, but Israel's God;"
The wondering train repeat the word.

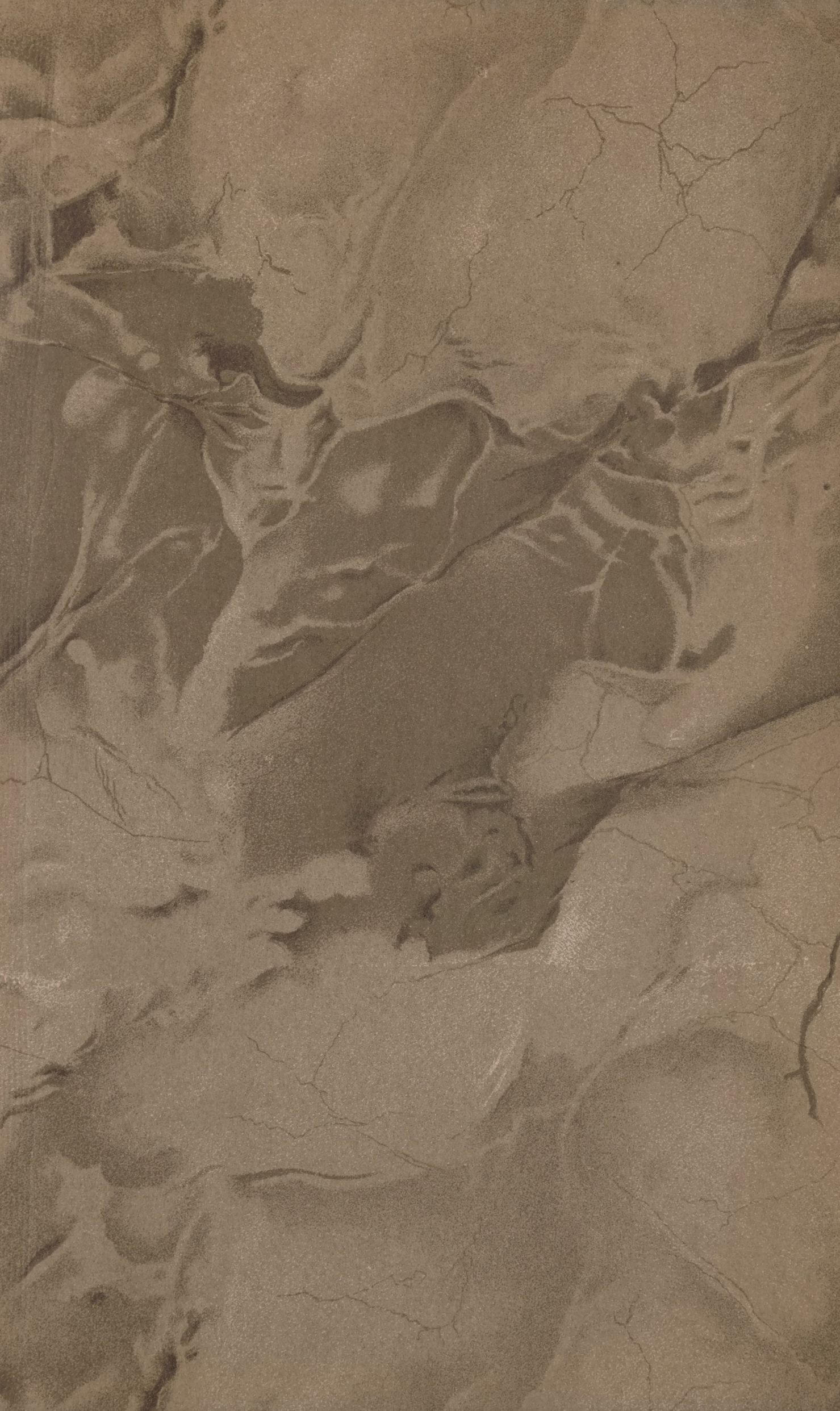
'Twas eve; on Syria's sandy plains
The scorching sun no longer beams;
Athwart the weary traveler's brow
The chilling night-wind passes now;
The prowling thief, with murderous steel
Each sandy hillock may conceal;
Where shall the wanderer find repose?
How shall he 'scape his secret foes?
On; pilgrim, on; yon glimmering light
That, through the distance, greets thy sight,
Is the bright beacon-ray to guide
Thy toiling footsteps to its side;
Not now does sorrow's gloomy cloud
That lovely spot in darkness shroud;
No rites, unholy, now are there;
No tainted incense fills the air;
On; pilgrim, on; for Israel's God
Is worshiped there, by Syria's lord;
And the rich mercies he receives
With bounteous hand he freely gives.

And now that our "Winter in Retirement" has drawn to a close, let us hope that the lesson we have tried to inculcate, that a life of excitement, and scenes of continued gayety are not necessary for the happiness of the young, may not be unheeded by those for whose benefit it is written. Life is too precious, too priceless a gift from our Father in heaven for part of its hours to be spent in trifling amusements, part in resting after their fatigue, and part in sad reflections upon their inutility. May this little volume, through His blessing, carry an antidote for these evils, and lead our youth to try its efficacy.

Autumn drew near; and, with her magic brush
Had touched the landscape; on the mountain's slope,
Bright tints were mingling with the evergreens
Crowning its heights; and, as the freshening breeze
Swept onward, in its joyous course it bore
The many colored leaves, the forest's pride,
Some few were green, and to the thoughtful mind

Recalled the youthful spring, in verdure rich;
Others appeared, touched with bright summer's ray,
And mingled with the glowing heaps, bring back,
The sunny days of bright July; but more
Displayed deep crimson hues, or, orange, gay,
Or golden yellow; or, perchance, laid clothed
In sombre garb—
I sought, long time,
A title for my Book; Leaves there are here
Of Thought and Memory; some fresh like youth,
And many tinged with Autumn's varying shades;
While, over all, a brightening light is cast,
The light of Hope.





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